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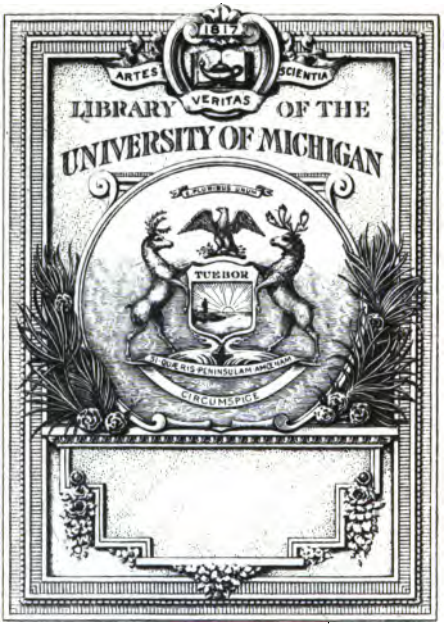
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# AMERICAN LITERATURE

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R. Waldo Emerson

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# AMERICAN LITERATURE

BY

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WELLESLEY COLLEGE

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New York

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# PREFACE

In this outline of our literary progress it is especially designed to show how essentially American literature has been an outgrowth of American life. A people originally of English stock and increasingly open to European influences, we have nevertheless a national character, modified by local conditions, and a national point of view. Hence our literature, while in one aspect a branch of the noble parent literature of England, is rightly viewed, also, as the individual expression of an independent nation. Its significance to us, whose history it embodies and interprets, naturally outranks its absolute value among the older literatures of the world.

It is obvious that the limits of this survey forbid the mention of every distinguished name.

Sincere acknowledgments are due to the publishers for their patience, to Mr. Herbert Putnam and other officers of the Boston Public Library for

their courtesy, and to my colleagues, Miss Lydia B. Godfrey, Wellesley librarian, and Professor Katharine Coman, for bibliographical and critical suggestions. The portraits of Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Hawthorne, and Thoreau appear by special permission of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. That of Irving is reproduced by permission of Messrs. G. P. Putnam's sons. Mr. William Evarts Benjamin, too, has kindly allowed the reproduction of his plates of Lanier, Parkman, and Cotton Mather, while for the likenesses of Lowell and Mrs. Stowe we are indebted to the friendliness of Mr. Francis V. Balch of Jamaica Plain, Mass., and Mrs. Samuel Scoville of Stamford, Conn.

K. L. B.

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# AMERICAN LITERATURE

## CHAPTER I

### THE COLONIAL PERIOD

From age to age man's still aspiring spirit
  Finds wider scope and sees with clearer eyes,
And thou in larger measure dost inherit
  What made thy great forerunners free and wise.
— JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, *Ode.*

I. **General Divisions of American Literature.** — Almost three centuries have passed since Englishmen began to plant settlements on the eastern coast of North America. Within the first century and a half, in round numbers, is embraced the Colonial Period of our life and letters. The Revolutionary agitation, conflict, victory, and resulting problems shaped, in the main, the literature of the following fifty years. The present century, nearly identical with the National Era, is really the first in which American books have won recognition. Yet the earlier centuries should not be ignored. The COLONIAL PERIOD is most easily handled in halves. The first seventy-five years may appropriately be termed the HEROIC AGE; the second seventy-five years the PROVINCIAL AGE. About

the first two or three generations of settlers clung the large atmosphere of the Old World. Graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, gallants of royalist houses, gentlemen and scholars, accustomed to the best in art, in thought, in society, lived in the log cabins of Jamestown and Plymouth Plantation. Between the forest and the ocean, they reared their children and their children's children in a certain breadth of culture. These Pilgrim Fathers and Gentlemen Adventurers were, like Æneas, a great part of the wonderful tale they told. Of all the splendid deeds on land and sea done by the countrymen and contemporaries of Shakespeare, not one outshines the painful, perilous colonization of America. Shipwreck, fever, famine, the wilderness, and the savage fought against the enterprise, but the resolute English temper, whether manifested in the bright courage of the cavalier or the stern persistence of the Puritan, faced disaster down.

The transition to a narrow outlook on life and a preoccupation with petty concerns was more marked in the North than in the South; for the wealthy planters of Virginia and her neighboring colonies continued, until the Revolution, to maintain the ancestral connection with Europe, often sending their sons across the Atlantic for education and travel. The southern settlers had brought with them to the New World the feudal tradition. Society had taken form in strata, with the great landowners at the top, the well-to-do farmers beneath, then poor whites and overseers, and under all a black mass of

slaves. Notwithstanding the evil features of the system, there was, as always in such societies, the advantage of high development for individuals of the privileged class. At the cost of the toiling and suffering many, a favored few were set free to attain rare personal graces and powers. When the hour of the Revolution struck, and the destinies of a people hung in the balance, it was the South that gave to the crisis the commander-in-chief, the most eloquent orator, the framer of the Declaration of Independence, the "Father of the Constitution," and the first President of the United States.

The northern colonists, on the other hand, represented in general the middle class of English society, the trades-people rather than the gentlefolk. Their memories were not of Tudor mansions embowered in park and beech groves, but of market-place, mill, smithy, and all the busy life of a Lancashire or Yorkshire town. They were dissenters from the Church of England, adherents of Cromwell and Parliament, men determined on democracy. The brave little colleges of Harvard and Yale sufficed them, as a rule, in place of foreign universities. They kept the level. If there were fewer giants in Massachusetts than in Virginia, fewer men pre-eminent for manners, wide experience of the world, and that distinction of bearing and character which springs from the habit of lordship, in average intelligence and morality the North far outranked the South. Yet New England, as the seventeenth century drew to a close, showed in many ways the ill effects of her isola-

tion from Europe. The Provincial Age had set in. The sense of proportion was lost. Primness, credulity, and pedantry stamped the scattered communities, intellectually starved and straitened as they were. Without the sting of peril, the lofty consciousness of a sincerity proved by immense sacrifice, by life risked daily for the sake of truth, without art, without adequate libraries, without that realizing knowledge of the myriad aspects and values of humanity promoted to-day by telegraph, cable, steam, newspapers, magazines, the mind became cramped and the religious vision blurred. The whipping of the Quakers was cruel, but the witchcraft trials were puerile as well. A smug and matter-of-fact quality, too, had crept into that stern piety. Bradford's *Journal* is touched with poetry and spirituality; not so Sewall's *Diary*. Yet the essential strain of Puritanism, the firm moral fibre and ideal aspiration of the Pilgrims, subsisted and subsists.

II. **Virginian Colonization.** — The first names directly connected with the English colonization of America are those of the noble Elizabethans, Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Sir Walter Raleigh. The former, on his return voyage from Newfoundland, in 1583, sank with his ship. Of two successive colonies sent by the latter, at large cost, to Roanoke, one, hard-pressed by hunger and Indian hostility, was taken off by Sir Francis Drake, and the other mysteriously disappeared. So arduous and so dangerous was the task of the pioneers. But Gilbert's words had struck a keynote to which brave hearts yet re-

sponded: "He is not worthy to live at all that for fear or danger of death shunneth his country's service and his own honor, seeing death is inevitable and the fame of virtue immortal."

Greed of riches, no less than "a great flame of desire to attempt some notable thing," moved men to undertake the Virginian adventure. The time had indeed gone by when eager mariners, pranked out in sky-colored suits, sailed forth gayly as for a festival trip, repeating to one another legends of far Cathay, — its dazzling roofs and pavements, mountain of turquoises and lake of pearls. Hope deferred had begun to tell upon the popular mind. While the London Company and the Plymouth Company, licensed by James in 1606, were trying to collect a new crew of colonists by the old lure of shining promises, the London theatres, whose free comment on current events resembled that of the modern press, made fun of this reputed El Dorado. In a play called *Eastward Ho* appears the character of Captain Seagull, who, amidst the clinking of the tavern pots, pours into the ears of a brace of bankrupt young gentlemen, Spendall and Scapethrift, a glowing account of the Virginian life, telling how the Indians are so in love with the English that "all the treasure they have, they lay at their feet," how in that happy clime even the dripping-pans are wrought of pure gold, "and for rubies and diamonds, they go forth on holidays and gather 'em by the seashore, to hang on their children's coats and stick in their caps."

The first permanent colony, settled at Jamestown under the London Company in 1607, numbered scarcely more than one hundred men, mainly fortune-seeking gallants, soldiers, servants, with not a few downright rogues and the merest sprinkling of mechanics. This was poor stuff for pioneering. By the end of three months diseases bred of hunger and hardship had cut the number down to sixty. Shipload by shipload, more adventurers came over. Still immigration could hardly keep pace with destruction. By 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, some sixteen hundred and fifty colonists had been sent to Virginia, of whom barely three hundred and fifty remained. A few had been taken home. The most had perished. But the English grip was not to be shaken off. Three years more, and Virginia had her House of Burgesses. Before 1620 began the importation of negroes. Frightful Indian massacres, disastrous though these were, failed to wipe out the palefaces. The English were in America to stay.

III. **Captain John Smith.** — Snatches of this story of manful strife against sea and wilderness make up our earliest American literature, if so it may be called. For those who love tales of adventure, there is a charm in these plain old narratives written by men newly delivered from the hazards they describe. Foremost among these stout-hearted sailors and Indian fighters is that far-famed soldier of fortune, Captain John Smith. One of the original Jamestown settlers, it was to his wary and intrepid leadership, assumed at the darkest hour, that the

*These are the Lines that shew thy Face: but those*
*That shew thy Grace and Glory brighter bee:*
*Thy Faire-Discoueries and Fowle-Overthrowes*
*Of Salvages much Civillizd by thee:*
*Best shew thy Spirit: and to it Glory Wyn.*
*So thou art Brasse without, but Golde within.*
*If so in Brasse too soft smiths Acts to beare)*
*I fix thy Fame to make Brasse steele out weare.*

*Thine as thou art Virtues.*
*John Dauies Heref.*

colony owed its preservation. Only twenty-seven years of age on his arrival in Virginia, he was already well seasoned to strenuous action and desperate straits. He asked nothing better. "Who would live at home idly (or think in himself any worth to live) only to eat, drink and sleep, and so die?"

He had already, by his own telling, tried soldiering in the Low Countries, played the hermit in a "pavilion of boughs" by a "fair brook" in his native Lincolnshire, wandered through Normandy and Brittany, and embarked for Italy only to be thrown overboard in a storm as an Englishman and a Protestant, who, like Jonah, brought the foul weather. He had borne a part in field-fights, sea-fights, sieges, and finally, "both lamenting and repenting to have seen so many Christians slaughter one another," had drawn his sword against the Turks. Three of these, he says, he slew in single combat, but for all his feats at arms he found himself, at last, in Tartar captivity, "slave of slaves," with an iron ring about his neck. Goaded by cruelty, he beat out his master's brains with a threshing-flail and fled in the slain bashaw's clothes to the desert, whence he made his escape into Russia. Returning, by way of Morocco, to England, he arrived in good time to join the Jamestown expedition. On the voyage he fell out with the leaders and came near hanging for it. Of this episode he writes in his cool fashion: "A pair of gallows was made, but Captain Smith, for whom they were intended, could not be persuaded to use them."

Smith's earliest book, *A True Relation of Virginia*, was printed in London in 1608, the year of Milton's birth. It is a hurried, semi-official document, giving a sketchy account of the first year of the colony. When we read of the young captain's own busy doings in those critical months, building forts and palisadoes, planting, exploring, fighting, sojourning among the Indians, now as captive, now as guest, trading blue beads for corn and venison, we wonder that he found the moments in which to jot down his news at all. Yet heedless of art, all rough-and-ready as the headlong narrative is, the vigor of the man, and the reality of the situation make it graphic. We see those long stretches of yellow sand, those malarial marshes teeming with wildfowl, the frantic figure of the skin-clad and befeathered conjurer, and the barbaric pomp and state of the great chief Powhatan.

The mention of Pocahontas in this book is but slight. It is not here, but in a later and fuller work, that Smith tells how the little Indian princess rescued him from death. Under the threshing of recent scholarship, it has looked as if this bit of native idyl might fly off as legend. It is easy to call the fiery captain a liar, now that his sword is rust; but the charge has yet to be established. In view of the facts that he rendered signal service to America and, like Coriolanus, rewarded his deeds with doing them, scoffs at his expense are peculiarly ungracious. Bearing in mind his own words: "Seeing honor is our life's ambition; and our ambition after death to have an honorable memory of our life," critics, in duty

bound to investigate to the uttermost, would nevertheless do well to be very sure of their grounds before besmirching that honor and denying him that memory.

Smith stayed in Virginia two years and a half. During the latter part of the time he served the colony as governor. In this capacity he penned a trenchant letter to the London stockholders, accompanied by a "Map of the Bay and the Rivers, with an annexed Relation of the countries and nations that inhabit them." In 1614, after a period of rest in his native land, he made a voyage of exploration to New England, starting out again, this time with a colony, a year later. Storms and pirates brought the enterprise to naught, and for the rest of his life Smith lived quietly at home, writing of what he had seen in his varied career, and still urging American colonization in face of the growing apathy and distaste. For the English mind was now so hardened against dreams of a Paradise over the sea that the veteran enthusiast, unable to impress his listeners with his hopes and plans for the New World, said he might as well have tried to "cut rocks with oyster shells."

IV. **William Strachey.** — Smith and others, among them a young nobleman of the storied house of Percy, have left vivid pictures of the suffering behind the palisadoes and the hazards of the wilderness. The dangers and disasters of those early voyages, too, have not lacked chroniclers. One Colonel Norwood recounts, in a fashion so naive as often to provoke a smile, his luckless trip in "The Virginia Merchant." Aristocrat that he was,

the ordinary deprivations of sea-life came hard to him, but when the crew on the crippled vessel were reduced to catching the ship rats, which sold among the famishing passengers for four or five dollars apiece, the story grows tragic enough. The poor colonel's worst torment was thirst, so that when at last he found himself on land again, lying flat, with his open mouth set against a running stream, "this," he says, "I thought the greatest pleasure I ever enjoyed on earth." But the wrath of the Atlantic found a momentary Homer in William Strachey. Certain impassioned paragraphs of his *Wrack and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates* have in them the tumult and the grandeur of a stormy sea. The very sentences seem to surge. There is nothing in the first two centuries of American literature to rank beside portions of this narrative for essential poetic quality. Written in 1610, it may well have given Shakespeare hints for *The Tempest*. Here the supreme poet may have found, in Strachey's "dreadful storm and hideous" that "did beat all light from heaven," in that reality of "terrible cries," and "prayers . . . in the heart and lips," his own "wild waters" and "noontide sun . . . bedimmed," the "cry" that "did knock against" Miranda's "very heart," and the despairing call of the wet mariners:

"All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!"

Shakespeare may have caught suggestions, verbal and dramatic, from Strachey's "outcries of officers," "glut of water," "clamors drowned in the winds." The thunder

which dismayed the company of "The Sea Venture" echoes in *The Tempest* as a "deep and dreadful organ pipe." "There was not a moment," says Strachey, "in which the sudden splitting or instant oversetting of the ship was not expected," and Shakespeare's despairing passengers are heard in "confused noise":

"'We split, we split!'—'Farewell, my wife and children!'—
'Farewell, brother!'—'We split, we split, we split!'"

Strachey tells how the "fright and amazement" of the "superstitious seamen" was intensified by "an apparition of a little round light, like a faint star, trembling and streaming along with a sparkling blaze, half the height upon the main mast, and shooting sometimes from shroud to shroud." In close resemblance, Prospero's "tricksy spirit" makes report:

"I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak,
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I flam'd amazement: sometimes I'd divide,
And burn in many places; on the topmast,
The yards, and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join."

In the issue, the distressed adventurers might have said, with Ferdinand,

"Though the seas threaten, they are merciful."

Running their battered ship aground, they escaped in boats to the Bermudas, Shakespeare's "still-vexed Bermoothes." These islands, Strachey relates, were in ill repute, as encompassed by "tempests, thunders, and other fearful objects" and given over "to devils and

wicked spirits." So Ferdinand, at sight of the enchanted fire, cried:

> "Hell is empty,
> And all the devils are here;"

but Ariel proved to be such "a harmless fairy" that it has devolved on Caliban to keep up the bad name of the ocean isles.

Little is known of Strachey, who was made, on his arrival in Virginia, secretary of the colony and in that capacity wrote a *History of Travel into Virginia*, a businesslike document crammed with information about the country, its commodities and native inhabitants, especially the mighty Powhatan. Little Pocahontas shocked the London barrister by her childish romping with the Jamestown boys. One of the most interesting features of this book is its account of the "godly hare," to whose bright house in the sun-rising Indian braves troop joyously after death. Thus early do we come upon a fragment of that strange rabbit-lore which flavors fireside talk to-day in the western tepee of the red man no less than in the cabin of the southern black.

V. **Development of Southern Life.** — Strachey has drawn a memorable picture of the three-years-old Jamestown as he saw it on arrival, — a low half-acre of ground, protected by a fence of planks and posts, and furthermore, on the hypothenuse side, by the river. At each corner stood a watch-tower furnished with one or two small cannon. Within the palisades lay a lesser triangle made of three rows of cabins. In the middle area were

grouped a market-place, house of storage, guard-house, and a "pretty chapel," with cedar chancel, pews and pulpit, a font and two bells. The little sanctuary was "kept passing sweet and trimmed up with divers flowers." Twice on Sunday and once on Thursday there was a sermon delivered there, the Governor attending in solemn state with his guard of fifty clad in "fair red cloaks." Every morning at ten and every afternoon at four those sweet-toned English bells rang to prayer. The cabins were roofed with bark, Indian fashion, and their floors were to some extent carpeted with Indian mats. Great fireplaces blazed with the abundant fuel. In this narrow compass the germ colony had stood out those first three desperate years. The huddled settlers had built for security, not comfort. So long as their window-holes were hung with heavy shutters, it did not matter that their shelves were but sparingly furnished with wooden bowls and trenchers. But already the southern stamp was on this fortified hamlet, — the stamp of the English Church, with its beautiful rites and ceremonies inherited from the Mother Church of Christendom, and, though less distinctly, the stamp of old English hospitality. Those primitive chimneys might be rudely fashioned of twigs daubed with clay, but in the intervals of "the starving time" they puffed out the smoke of good fellowship. The corn might be pounded in a hollow tree-trunk with a rough-hewn log, but the corn-cake was divided. The state that attended the church-going of the Governor, whose green velvet chair and prayer-

cushion were conspicuous in the chancel, denoted that aristocratic bias which the South has not yet lost. These early settlements, nevertheless, had much sorry material to assimilate. Strachey speaks of the "many unruly gallants, packed hither by their friends to escape ill destinies," but these scape-graces had a noble strain of blood which sometimes stirred them to build up a new manhood in a new country. Others proved lawless, some tasting the sharp edge of military justice, like that ringleader of the third mutiny in the company of the wrecked "Sea Venture," who, condemned to the gallows on the Bermudas, "earnestly desired, being a gentleman, that he might be shot to death, and towards the evening he had his desire, the sun and his life setting together."

Worse yet, England came to regard Virginia as a convenient dumping-ground for her vagabonds, paupers, even felons. The system of redemptioners came into play. Poor folk, for whom there was no honest bread in England, went out to work in the plantations, binding themselves for fixed terms of service. Convicts were shipped to the colonies and sold into lifelong slavery there. Girls, coaxed or kidnapped, were landed in flocks and put up at auction as wives to the settlers, the price being paid in pounds of tobacco. With the lavish grants of land and the liberality of soil and climate, affluence came to many who had previously known squalor, but fine feathers did not make fine birds. Not Master John Pory alone, watching "our cow-keeper here of James

City" go on Sundays "accoutred all in fresh flaming silk," turned in vexation of spirit to the solitudes of those "crystal waters and odoriferous woods."

On the whole, the cavalier element, recruited by royalists who, upon the execution of Charles the First, fled England in horror and wrath, held its own, assisted by the natural features of the country. The level reaches of productive earth and the numerous river-ways rendered it possible for these Virginian gentlemen, as the savages receded and the times became more settled, to withdraw from their displeasing neighbors and dwell in baronial fashion on great tobacco plantations, surrounded by indentured servants and the gentle negro slaves. These lords of the manor remained true to their tradition of hospitality, even exceeding, in the free-heartedness of pioneer life, the measure of generous entertainment known to their ancestral squires and to the English country-house to-day. Those one-storied, wide-chimneyed, ample Virginian mansions were the centres of a delightful social culture. The amenities and courtesies, undervalued by the New England Puritans, found their best American fostering here. Because of the remoteness of the plantations, the sacraments, as baptism and marriage, which in England had been celebrated in the church, were transferred to the home. The southern home became a sacred place. But the church suffered. Whitaker, "the Apostle of Virginia," had no successor. He would have been the Eliot of the Chesapeake Indians, but his day of labor was cut short.

It was largely a fox-hunting and horse-racing clergy that the establishment sent over to drink too long at the colonial tables. In a society such as this, education fared ill. Sir William Berkeley, for thirty-six years the royal governor, opposed free schools and printing as furthering independent thought, heresy, and political unrest, — a sound despotic position. But, indeed, the manner of settlement on broad estates instead of in communities made the public schools of New England impracticable for the southern colonies. And the Indians, for their part, by a fierce massacre deferred for seventy years the College of William and Mary originally designed, like Dartmouth, for their own instruction.

VI. **The Dearth of Later Colonial Literature in the South** was an almost inevitable result of the living conditions. As for books, these terrestrial magnates imported them from England in their own trading-vessels, tied up, after the voyage, to their own river-wharves, just as they imported, once a year, the fashions and the news. COLONEL BYRD, a distinguished man of affairs and an accomplished gentleman, left some admirable notes of colonial travel, lively, chatty, witty, alert of thought and urbane of temper, but a century passed before they were put into print. There were historians, of a sort, but the most entertaining of these, ROBERT BEVERLY, educated, like Byrd, in Europe, candidly adds, after requesting from his reader the grace of credence, "the next favor I would ask of him should be not to criticise too unmercifully upon my style. I am an Indian and don't pretend to

be exact in my language." So John Hammond, who championed the cause of immigration in a pamphlet designating Virginia and Maryland under the title of *Leah and Rachel,* finds his sentences "harsh and disordered," and gay George Alsop, who had a laughing word to speak for the younger province, recognizes his budget of drolleries as "wild and confused." In 1693, William and Mary was opened, "a college without a chapel, without a scholarship and without a statute." Even so, it furnished from its faculty a few writers of text-books, theology, and Virginian history, who, at least, held themselves accountable to the rules of syntax. Most memorable of these is that staunch, unwearying Scotchman, JAMES BLAIR, a very missionary of education as of righteousness, he who "could not rest until schoolteachers were in the land."

VII. **The Earlier Colonial Period in New England** witnessed a struggle against even greater physical odds than those encountered by the southern settlers. It was spring when the Jamestown colonists, all men, landed on the Virginian shore. The "Mayflower" brought families, nearly half that initial hundred being women and children. "And for the season," wrote Governor Bradford, "it was winter, and they that know the winters of that country know them to be sharp and violent, and subject to cruel and fierce storms, dangerous to travel to known places, much more to search an unknown coast. Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild

beasts and wild men? And what multitudes there might be of them they knew not."

A pitiful winter it was, for when at last "warm and fair weather appeared, and the birds sang in the trees most pleasantly," half that little company lay buried beneath the Plymouth pines. But the founders of New England, men of ideas and principles, sober-headed, earnest-hearted, seeking homes rather than fortunes, on God's errand, not their own, were proof against defeat. At their first landing on that wild coast, "they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of heaven," and in faith and patience did they persevere. This advance guard of Pilgrims from Leyden came in 1620. At the end of seven years their number had not doubled, but it was then that certain Lincolnshire dissenters "fell into discourse about New England and the planting of the Gospel there." The following year the great Puritan exodus began.

> "Well worthy to be magnified are they
> Who, with sad hearts, of friends and country took
> A last farewell, their loved abodes forsook,
> And hallowed ground in which their Fathers lay;
> Then to the new-found World explored their way,
> That so a Church, unforced, uncalled to brook
> Ritual restraints, within some sheltering nook
> Her Lord might worship and His word obey
> In Freedom."

By 1640, when that tide of immigration was stayed by the brightening outlook at home for the Parliamentarian party, upwards of twenty thousand Englishmen, mainly of the sturdy middle-class stock and God-fearing

Puritan temper, were settled in New England, their fifty villages dotting the wilderness like candles in the dark.

Rude enough at first sight were those primitive towns, — clusters of log-cabins and frame buildings of the plainest sort gathered about the square, belfry-topped meeting-house. But the interior of these simple abodes testified to decent, provident goodmen and dames, who had shipped, from their well-to-do homes across the sea, store of linens and woollens, oaken chests cunningly "wrought" and panelled, brass candlesticks, claw-footed tables, spinning-wheels, and even, now and then, the new luxury of a chair, massy, polished, richly carven, with queer, triangular seat, — solid, self-respecting furniture that outwears the centuries. The Puritan mothers, gowned in stiff, long-waisted bodice with crossed kerchief at throat, and with decorous skirt, kept the floors freshly sanded and the shelf-rows of pewter bright, while the sweet Priscillas, though themselves in "sad-colored" attire, would sometimes venture on gay hangings of chintz or calico to hide the rough walls, which displayed, in lieu of pictures, such ornaments as muskets, pikes, antlers, and the burnished warming-pan. The fare these careful housewives set before the sturdy men in leather jerkins, smallclothes, and steeple-crowned hats was commonly of the simplest, mush and johnny-cake, with perhaps a trencher of wild turkey and a jug of home-brewed beer, but the blessings were long in proportion. In the time when

"the dainty Indian maize
Was eat with clam shells out of wooden trays;

* * * * * * *

'Twas in those days an honest grace would hold
Till an hot pudding grew at heart a-cold."

Seen from the safe and comfortable distance of two hundred years and more, this life was in rare degree poetical and picturesque. Training day, Election day, Thanksgiving day, gave it animation, no less than the Indian raid or the almost equally exciting scrimmage of town-meeting, that cradle of American liberties. Adventures with bear or panther, terrible or pathetic glimpses of the forest tribes, already sullenly receding on their long westward march, pious scandals clustering about some bluff Captain Underhill, in steel cap and leathern breastplate, or some ill-starred Anne Hutchinson, so eloquent as to win over the young governor to her heresy, gave abundant themes for story. One might even meet, by moonlight, on Boston Common, the calm, rebuking ghost, in silver-gray raiment, of the Quaker matron, Mary Dyer, hanged there as a troubler of Israel. But no scribe, not a single tutor or homespun-coated student of that "school of prophets," Harvard College, has left record of such encounter. It was the day of axe and musket, not of quill. Yet books were written in New England, and, after 1639, printed there as well. Their authors are chiefly to be found in the ranks of the magistracy and the clergy.

VIII. **The Early Governors** became, in several cases, the historians of the infant colonies. Upon them lay the supreme responsibility, and by them were written the authoritative accounts, not only for the information of friends beyond the Atlantic, but in obedience to some deep, prophetic sense of the significance that attended these humble and hard beginnings of a nation. The most venerable figure here is WILLIAM BRADFORD, second governor of Plymouth Colony. Chosen to that office on the death of Governor Carver, when the "Mayflower" had but just sailed away, he was annually reëlected for the rest of his life, except for those "five times he by importunity gat off." His *History of Plymouth Plantation*, extending to 1646, the year when this Moses of the wilderness rested from his labors, "lamented," wrote Cotton Mather, "by all the colonies of New England, as a common blessing and father to them all," was not published in full until more than two centuries had gone by. The manuscript was freely drawn upon by later chroniclers, by NATHANIEL MORTON, secretary of Plymouth Colony, who used also the animated journals of GOVERNOR WINSLOW, by the scrupulous and laborious THOMAS PRINCE, by WILLIAM HUBBARD, one of the nine who formed the first graduating class of Harvard College, and by THOMAS HUTCHINSON, the Tory governor whom Massachusetts hated; but the precious pages mysteriously disappeared at about the time of the Revolution, to turn up, in 1855, in the Bishop of London's library. By the

courtesy of England, the document was restored to America in 1897.

Bradford's work is more than a chronicle. He prefaces his year-by-year story of Plymouth Plantation with an account of the rise of English dissent and the persecutions by which the Pilgrims were harried out of the land, of their sojourn in Holland, and their momentous resolve to seek a new home for their faith across the "vast and furious ocean." Sweet and noble always, the recital is sometimes shot with gleams of an ideal grace, as in these two sentences describing the farewell. "And the time being come that they must depart, they were accompanied with most of their brethren out of the city, unto a town sundry miles off called Delft-Haven, where the ship lay ready to receive them. So they left that goodly and pleasant city, which had been their resting-place near twelve years, but they knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on those things, but lift up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits."

The work which inevitably comes into comparison with this, the *History of New England*, written by the stately JOHN WINTHROP, first governor of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay and often after reëlected, had also to wait until the present century for publication in its entirety. This record, historically the more important as dealing with the colony of greater destinies, has less literary value than the other. Begun by Winthrop on shipboard and continued on land amid harassing

cares and urgent duties, it was jotted down in diary form, now somewhat fully, now with the gaps or mere headings of an over-busy man. It possesses dignity, fidelity to fact, and a certain downright, practical force, but it fails to distinguish between great things and small, is blotted by touches of the sombre Puritan superstition, and remains, as a whole, without attraction. The most memorable passage is Winthrop's discourse upon liberty, — a mighty watchword with men of the Puritan stamp from Milton down. "There is a twofold liberty, natural, . . . and civil or federal. The first is common to man with beasts and other creatures. By this, man, as he stands in relation to man simply, hath liberty to do what he lists; it is a liberty to evil as well as to good. This liberty is incompatible and inconsistent with authority. . . . The other kind of liberty I call civil or federal; it may also be termed moral, in reference to the covenant between God and man, in the moral law, and the politic covenants and constitutions amongst men themselves. This liberty is the proper end and object of authority, and cannot subsist without it; and it is a liberty to that only which is good, just, and honest. This liberty you are to stand for, with the hazard not only of your goods but of your lives, if need be. . . . This liberty is maintained and exercised in a way of subjection to authority." Here we have political wisdom fused by patriotic and personal passion — for Governor Winthrop spoke these words before the General Court in answer to a charge

of having exceeded his prerogative — into a grave and lofty eloquence.

IX. **The Early Ministers.** — The Pilgrims were Separatists, who, believing that to every congregation and every believer the divine will is revealed, were opposed to the idea of a national church and to the rule of bishops. The Puritans had not separated themselves from the Church of England, but had vainly tried to secure a simpler ritual and the reform of ecclesiastical abuses. In the New World, these two sects soon merged their differences in a common Congregationalism, whose ministers wielded a power not second even to that of the magistrates.

He was little short of an autocrat, that New England parson of the Heroic Age, in his black Geneva cloak and close-fitting black velvet cap. The tongue that decried him was in danger of a cleft stick. Criticisms on his sermons were answered with public stripes. Truancy from his preaching led to the stocks or the wooden cage. The franchise was limited to church members, and although divines were not eligible to the magistracy, their political influence was paramount. The Rev. Mr. Ward of Ipswich drew up the *Body of Liberties*. When perplexing questions arose, the ministers were called in to advise with the General Court. Their words, indeed, were well worthy of respect. It was the Rev. Mr. Hooker of Hartford who said: "The foundation of authority is laid in the free consent of the people." Under this clerical control, the cause of civil freedom was advanced; not so the cause of religious toleration. The Pilgrims

were disposed toward liberality, but very early in the history of the Puritan colony, a synod of the clergy had discovered among those log-splitting, corn-planting settlers no fewer than eighty-two erroneous opinions on matters theological. Maryland, not Massachusetts, honored the individual conscience.

The meeting-house was the strong tower of Colonial truth. Built on a hill-top, it had served, at the outset, for fort as well as church. Ammunition was stored in its loft. On its flat roof cannon were posted and sentinels kept watch. The drum-beat assembled an armed congregation.

> "For once, for fear of Indian beating,
> Our grandsires bore their guns to meeting,
> Each man equipped on Sunday morn
> With psalm-book, shot, and powder-horn,
> And looked in form, as all must grant,
> Like the ancient true church militant."

The Pequot outbreak and King Philip's War proved the need of these precautions, but even where, with lapse of time, such carnal defences became less requisite, the meeting-house remained the garrison of the godly in the spiritual conflict waged by the brave old parsons against the powers of hell, including all heresies and, as pillory, whipping-post, and branding-iron bore witness, too many heretics.

There were gracious and saintly men in that stern ministry. FRANCIS HIGGINSON of Salem, "the first," wrote Cotton Mather, "in a catalogue of heroes," was a courte-

ous gentleman no less than a leader of rare promise. JOHN ELIOT of Natick, Apostle to the Indians, has left a fragrant memory. "The holy, heavenly, sweet-affecting and soul-ravishing" THOMAS SHEPARD of Cambridge, whose autobiography is a little volume of enduring interest, preached the wrath of God and the pains of hell in a voice of melting music. The indomitable THOMAS HOOKER of Hartford, "who, when he was doing his Master's work, would put a king into his pocket," intermitted his pulpit thunders with words of purest Christian insight. The very head and front of that theocracy, JOHN COTTON of Boston, was by nature most gentle and benign. The illustrious ROGER WILLIAMS, founder of Providence, who, becoming too lively a thorn in the side of intolerance, was driven by Cotton and his following out of Massachusetts Colony, appeared to the Pilgrims of Plymouth Plantation "a man lovely in his carriage" and "having many precious parts." But they battled fiercely, these old warriors of the Lord, and the spent artillery of their combats makes a prodigious pile of sermons, tracts, and treatises. Apart from controversial writings, in which those doughty duellists, John Cotton and Roger Williams, abounded, and apart from works of strict theology, there remain sermons of religious, political, and biographical tenor, catechisms, commentaries, the *New England Primer* and the *Bay Psalm Book*. This last was the first volume ever printed in America, and, in point of versification, probably the worst.

These early New England preachers, men of mark, in

many cases thrust out of large parishes in England because of non-conformity, here on the edge of the wilderness redeemed in no small measure what seems a growing bigotry and narrowness of thought by an austerity of self-discipline, devoutness of spirit, and apostolic beauty of bearing more eloquent than all the cannonades of their theology. This pulpit oratory, chief mental stimulus of the times though it was, hardly outranks the work of the Colonial clergy for education. Fosterers of the public school, presidents and protectors of the beloved little college at Cambridge, the Massachusetts ministers aspired to no prouder epitaph than "a good scholar and a great Christian." They were not alone in their enthusiasm for learning. The laity pressed them closely in the race. The classic Cato finds a New England parallel in Governor Bradford, who, after a lifetime of sore labors, sat joyfully down to the writing of Hebrew exercises: "Though I am grown aged, yet I have had a longing desire to see, with my own eyes, something of that most ancient language and holy tongue in which the law and oracles of God were writ; and in which God and angels spoke to the holy patriarchs of old time; and what names were given to things, from the creation. And though I cannot attain to much herein, yet I am refreshed to have some glimpse hereof (as Moses saw the land of Canaan afar off)."

But apart from the Sacred Scriptures, literature, in its conscious and æsthetic forms, made no part of Pilgrim or Puritan concern. Two only of the Colonial ministers,

NATHANIEL WARD of Ipswich, re-named from its Indian title Agawam, and MICHAEL WIGGLESWORTH of Malden, approached its border-line. The former, in his *Simple Cobbler of Agawam*, produced a rough anticipation of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. This pungent satire, published at London in 1647, inveighs, sometimes with a caustic drollery, sometimes with a right manly vehemence, against the principle of religious toleration, the vanities of womankind, and the state of contemporary English politics. "Poly-piety is the greatest impiety in the world." "I honor the woman that can honor herself with her attire; a good text always deserves a fair margent," but as for a woman who lives but to ape the newest court fashions, "I look at her as the very gizzard of a trifle, the product of a quarter of a cipher, the epitome of nothing; fitter to be kicked if she were of a kickable substance than either honored or humored." "A king that lives by law, lives by love; and he that lives above law, shall live under hatred, do what he can. Slavery and knavery go as seldom asunder as tyranny and cruelty."

MICHAEL WIGGLESWORTH lived on into the eighteenth century, but his principal poems belong to the earlier Colonial period. He was better than his poetry. "A little feeble shadow of a man," so sickly from his youth up as to be sometimes tortured with a suspicion that he desired health more than holiness, he performed the double labor of preacher and physician. Sensitive of soul, his Calvinistic faith, loyally held, weighed upon

him with a great sadness. He dared not let himself be gladsome with his friends, though they affectionately urged that occasional mirth would "recreate one's tired spirits and prolong one's life," for he feared that he might come to forget the end in the means and "take pleasure for itself, without reference to health and so to the glory of God." He entered in his note-book among his resolutions: "Not to rejoice much in any creature. Thou knowest not whether it shall comfort thee or torment thee." Even his love of study anguished him. "I cannot prevail against that cursed frame, to think the time long that I spend in reading the Word of God. Outgoings of heart after my studies again get head." A Harvard tutor, he cared for the welfare of his students so ardently as to become alarmed lest his "affection to them should so drink up his very spirit as to steal away his heart from God." A Malden pastor, the calamities that befell his flock he looked upon as God's "stroke" for his own sins. "God's visiting hand has now plucked away from us four brethren of our church in a few days. The Lord was pleased to set in, and break my heart, and show me that I am the man who sin unto death the precious servants of God, and drive God from the place and society where I live, and I pull down wrath." He greeted the approach of death.

> "Welcome, sweet Rest, by me so long desired,
> Who have with sins and griefs so long been tired."

Willingly he took leave of the world.

"Now, farewell, world, in which is not my treasure;
I have in thee enjoyed but little pleasure."

His dying thoughts of New England were gloomy, especially in regard to her . .

"young brood and rising generation,
Wanton and proud, ripe for God's indignation."

His sinking voice urged on his fellow-soldiers in the Holy War.

"Farewell, sweet saints of God, Christ's little number;
Beware, lest you, through sloth, securely slumber.
Stand to your spiritual arms, and keep your watch."

For his sorrow's sake, let his poems be forgiven him, even his lurid *Day of Doom*, frightfully expressive as it is of the extremest type of Calvinism. This crudely fashioned ballad, "one more insult to God," was more widely circulated in New England, more largely bought, more closely read, more deeply graven on the popular mind than any poem since.

X. **The Tenth Muse.** — During the early Colonial period New England enjoyed one purely literary sensation and only one. The records of Bradford and Winthrop were supplemented by more homely chronicles, — *The Wonder-Working Providence* of Edward Johnson, founder of Woburn, a Puritan of the Puritans; accounts of the Pequot War bluntly penned by Major Mason, Captain Underhill, and others; and the Indian treatises of Daniel Gookin, who should be famed with Eliot, Penn, and Roger Williams for justice and mercy

toward the native inhabitants of the land. Descriptions of the New World, begun in the journals of Bradford, Winslow, and Higginson, were continued by Wood's *New England's Prospect* and Josselyn's *New England's Rarities*. One Thomas Morton, who established, where Quincy now stands, a settlement known as Mount Wollaston or Merry Mount, in which the old English revels were maintained with, perhaps, the freer license of a wilder soil, should be added to the list of descriptive writers on the strength of his *New English Canaan*. In this he took occasion to satirize the Plymouth colonists, who, scandalized by his Maypole and, it may be, by more flagrant misdemeanors, had bundled him back to England. These works, as well as the theological publications of the time, were written for other than artistic ends. The *Day of Doom* is more akin to sermon than to poem. But at the very middle of the century, a little volume was published in London with the startling title *The Tenth Muse lately sprung up in America*. The "gentlewoman in those parts," so announced as author on the title-page, was Mistress ANNE BRADSTREET, resident near Andover.

Of English birth, she was four years younger than Milton. Her father, Thomas Dudley, well-born, well-bred, and wedded to a "gentlewoman of fortune," was an iron Puritan. At sixteen Anne Dudley married Simon Bradstreet, son of a non-conformist minister, and himself Master of Arts of Cambridge University. Two years after the marriage came the emigration to Massa-

chusetts, where both Dudley and Bradstreet took place among the leaders, each succeeding, in due time, to the dignity of the governor's chair. Mistress Bradstreet, in like degree, held high rank among the Puritan dames, no such "starched pieces of austerity" as they looked to the laughing eyes of London playwrights, but brave and tender women whose praise was in their homes. The love-letters of Mistress Winthrop to her husband are as poetic with their wifely trust and sweetness as the rhymed addresses of Anne Bradstreet to hers.

But our pioneer blue-stocking, however devotedly she cherished her husband and their "eight birds hatcht in one nest," however diligently she polished her thirteen pewter platters and four large silver spoons, felt obliged to apologize for her intrusion into the realm of letters.

> "I am obnoxious to each carping tongue
> Who says my hand a needle better fits,
> A Poet's pen all scorn I should thus wrong,
> For such despite they cast on Female wits;
> If what I do prove well, it won't advance,
> They'll say it's stol'n, or else it was by chance."

Very woman in this, she disarms masculine criticism by a touch of flattering meekness.

> "Let Greeks be Greeks, and women what they are,
> Men have precedency and still excel,
> It is but vain unjustly to wage war;
> Men can do best and women know it well,
> Preëminence in all and each is yours,
> Yet grant some small acknowledgment of ours."

This carried the day. Even the redoubtable Nathan-

iel Ward, while not retracting his opinion as to the "squirrels' brains" of women of fashion, penned couplets in Madam Bradstreet's honor, making Apollo say, in somewhat nasal note:

> "It half revives my chill frost-bitten blood,
> To see a woman once do aught that's good."

Other clerical connoisseurs gave freer rein to their pride and delight in New England's prodigy. The Rev. Mr. Norton, for instance, was confident that if Virgil were to

> "hear her lively strain,
> He would condemn his works to fire again."

Unhappily, these verses, hailed so jubilantly on our songless coast, are essentially unpoetic. Not merely stiff and dull, not merely cramped with verbal crotchets fashioned after a false model of literary elegance, their fatal error lies in reproducing the author's reading in lieu of her experience. Glorious it would have been to serve as the Miriam of the Puritan exodus, to give lyric voice to the mingled emotions of those mighty years, but this "Grave Matron" chose to transcribe what she deemed useful pages of the ancient histories, anatomies, and what not that she found among her father's fifty books. In laborious measures she sets out the Four Constitutions, Four Ages of Man, Four Seasons of the Year, Four Monarchies, her staid Pegasus seeming to go forever on all fours. An occasional elegy or epitaph is as much of a relief as this antiquated vol-

ume grants. It has not even the interest of local color. Its birds are nightingales; its flowers primroses.

**XI. The Later Colonial Period in New England.** — To an age of scholars turned backwoodsmen succeeded the age of backwoodsmen striving after scholarship. New England, once rude and heroic, had become provincial. The inheritors were less than the achievers. The training of Harvard was not the training of Oxford. The Atlantic grew wider and wider. Still the Puritan conscience, the middle-class English thrift, the unwearying pulpit, and the ubiquitous little school-house were doing their steadfast work.

Piety was yet the dominant tone. The meeting-house had shed its cannon and assumed a steeple, but its internal discipline was hardly relaxed. It remained a bleak and austere place of long prayers and longer sermons, and of most discordant singing with little aid of printed notes and none of instrument. There were no stoves. Sometimes it chanced that midwinter babies were sprinkled with baptismal water for which the ice in the christening bowl had to be broken, the parents allowing themselves a twinge of pride if the tiny Puritan endured this ordeal without a cry. Sometimes the communion bread "was frozen pretty hard and rattled sadly into the plates." The congregation embraced the whole community, seated by scale of social consequence. Magistracy, wealth, learning, military service, age, were factors in dignity. This arrangement, with the delicate distinctions involved, must have ruffled

the Sabbath peace of many a gentle saint, on her way

"To the goodly house of worship, where, in order due and fit,
As by public vote directed, classed and ranked the people sit;
Mistress first and goodwife after, clerkly squire before the clown,
From the brave coat lace-embroidered, to the gray frock, shading down."

Men and women were seated apart, spinsters, ungallantly known in Boston as thornbacks, by themselves, negroes by themselves, boys by themselves. These last, massed in the gallery or on the pulpit stairs, gave the tithing-man most trouble, although his knobbed rod of office had occasionally to tap the nodding periwig of some grave elder, or tickle with its pendent foxtail the drooping eyelids of a tired dame. The preachers still maintained intellectual ascendency, but political authority was slipping from their hands. The franchise had passed beyond the line of church membership. The REV. JOHN WISE of Ipswich, an early example of muscular Christianity, overthrew a covert design of the Boston ministers to call New England back to a government by will of the clergy. But the pen was still their own. It has been estimated that of the five hundred and fifty publications, known to have been produced in America from 1706 to 1718, all but eighty-four were on religious topics, forty-nine of the eighty-four being almanacs. Eminent in the ranks of clerical authorship was REV. MATTHEW BYLES of Boston, a genuine wit and reputed in his day a poet who bade fair

"to rise and sing and rival Pope."

No compliment could have pleased the persistent old Tory better, for Pope was the star of his literary idolatry. The Rev. Nicholas Noyes of Salem had a special gift for the fabrication of punning elegies. The Rev. Urian Oakes, minister at Cambridge and president of Harvard College, commanded an eloquent prose and could, on occasion, turn off a respectable copy of verses. School-masters, too, were coming to the fore. Peter Folger of Nantucket, grandfather of Benjamin Franklin, protested in doggerel verse, with admirable good sense and good heart, against the persecuting spirit of the magistracy and "college men."

"Though you do many prayers make,
And add fasting thereto,
Yet if your hands be full of blood,
All this will never do."

Cambridge had a poetic school-master in Benjamin Tompson, who shook his head over New England's increase of domestic comforts and fluently bewailed the good old times. But although the coast towns, after King Philip's overthrow, were at leisure to cultivate the arts of peace, the frontier still dwelt under the terror of tomahawk and scalping-knife. Mary Rowlandson, the pastor's wife at Lancaster, which was destroyed by the savages in 1676, underwent, with a wounded child in her arms, an agony of Indian captivity. Ransomed by the good offices of the women of Boston, she wrote the story of her sufferings in a spirited, straight-forward English that makes them vivid yet. John Williams, pastor of the

brave little outpost at Deerfield, has left a touching narrative of a like experience occurring so late as 1704. The struggle for a foothold, however, was over. The supremacy of the white man was secured. The road to literature lay open, but artistic stimulus and inheritance were lacking. Europe was no longer a present memory, and Puritanism had yet to make friends with beauty.

XII. **Samuel Sewall.** — The Puritans had, from the outset, a utilitarian bent. Combined with a peculiar excitability of temperament, which betrayed itself in the witchcraft mania, in religious rhapsodies and trances, in the groanings and outcries that attended the Great Awakening, was an element of solid earth. The transcendental enthusiasm was conserved by the clergy to flower in Jonathan Edwards and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The shrewd, thrifty, practical quality, the very essence of the average Yankee, was relegated to the laymen. The hard-headed honesty belonging to this latter type is well exemplified where

> "Stately and slow, with thoughtful air,
> His black cap hiding his whitened hair,
> Walks the Judge of the great Assize,
> Samuel Sewall the good and wise;"

but the Yankee humor, with its dry, cool perception of incongruities, its hands-in-the-pockets survey of the drolleries of the universe, is hardly manifest in the make-up of the decorous magistrate.

He was an amiable and honorable man, whose outer

and inner life for fifty-six years, laid open upon the pages of his private *Diary*, bears the light as few men's lives could do, but he had a leaning toward creature comforts and a respect for shillings and pence prophetic of the Yankee constitution. In the beginning the spiritually minded minister of Salem, Francis Higginson, had warned his flock against an undue care for money-getting. "Let it never be forgotten that our New England was originally a plantation of religion and not a plantation of trade. And if there be a man among you who counts religion as twelve, and the world as thirteen, let such a one remember that he hath neither the spirit of a true New England man, nor yet of a sincere Christian."

The Puritan laity of the Provincial Age were strict in church attendance and conspicuously upright in conduct, but doubtless there were many, who, like Madam Knight, being well entertained in the present, were poignantly reminded of the hereafter only on occasions of special stress. This lady, of delightful enterprise and spirit, journeyed on horseback from Boston to New York, *via* New Haven, in 1704, and wrote a lively narrative of her adventures. It is still an entertaining little chronicle. The discomforts of wood roads and swamps, of rough fords and bridges "very tottering," as well as husk beds and fare contrary to her "notion of cookery," she details with a certain heroic relish. Even so early, the sense of being a Bostonian enabled one to rise superior to all impertinences of man and nature. Nevertheless, there were moments of peril in which this vivacious pilgrim

fell to the reflection, apparently well founded, that her "call was very questionable."

This lump of earth in Puritan character, this homely common-sense, served as moral ballast. In the dark days of the witchcraft delusion, a plain merchant of Boston, Robert Calef, stood for justice and humanity against the great preachers, Increase and Cotton Mather, whose fanatical zeal was the chief agent in furthering that riot of superstition. The Mathers, blinded to the end by passionate credulity, never saw the blood-stain on their hands, but Judge Sewall sorely repented his share in that bad business and, with characteristic integrity, made public confession of his fault in the Old South Meeting-house. It was he who published the first anti-slavery tract in America, — *The Selling of Joseph.*

It is not his tracts that we read to-day, however, but his *Diary*, which achieves by a succession of simplest touches at once a portrait of the man and a picture of the times. Cozy times they were, for all their Puritan austerities and their public anxieties and losses. Indian alarms, threatened charters, tyrannical governors, still left quiet space for social and domestic cheer. There was abundance of marmalade and blackcherry brandy, feasts as well as fasts, weddings as well as funerals, though perhaps the chastened taste of the day enjoyed the funerals more. Sewall used to find a visit to his family-tomb, with its accumulating store of coffins, "an awful yet pleasing treat." Sunday services and Thursday evening lectures, family prayers and private devo-

tions, scripture readings and catechisings, allowed intervals of time for "a little winter-love in a dark corner." It is diverting enough to play the eaves-dropper while this gallant but prudent grandsire woos the well-to-do old ladies of his not always successful choice with tracts and printed sermons, with "one-half pound of sugar almonds, cost three shillings per pound" and "gingerbread wrapped up in a clean sheet of paper." A share of his goodies sometimes fell to little children, whose lot in that grave community was not without its compensations. A four-year-old might get whipped "pretty smartly" for his "playing at prayer time and eating when return thanks," but it was in those Colonial twilights that over a Boston cradle were first crooned the melodies of a humble poetess better beloved by time than the Tenth Muse or any rhyming theologian of them all, — Mother Goose.

XIII. **The Mather Dynasty** is a term not inappropriately applied to the ruling family among the New England clergy. The emigrant, Richard Mather, who arrived in Boston in 1635, was a Lancashire man and an Oxonian. After preaching for fifteen years in England without a surplice, he had been silenced for non-conformity. Arriving in Massachusetts, he promptly gathered a church at Dorchester and there "continued, a blessing unto all the churches in this wilderness until his dying day, even for near upon four and thirty years together."

This stern old patriarch fathers a line of some eighty ministers. Of his four sons, all in the pulpit, Increase,

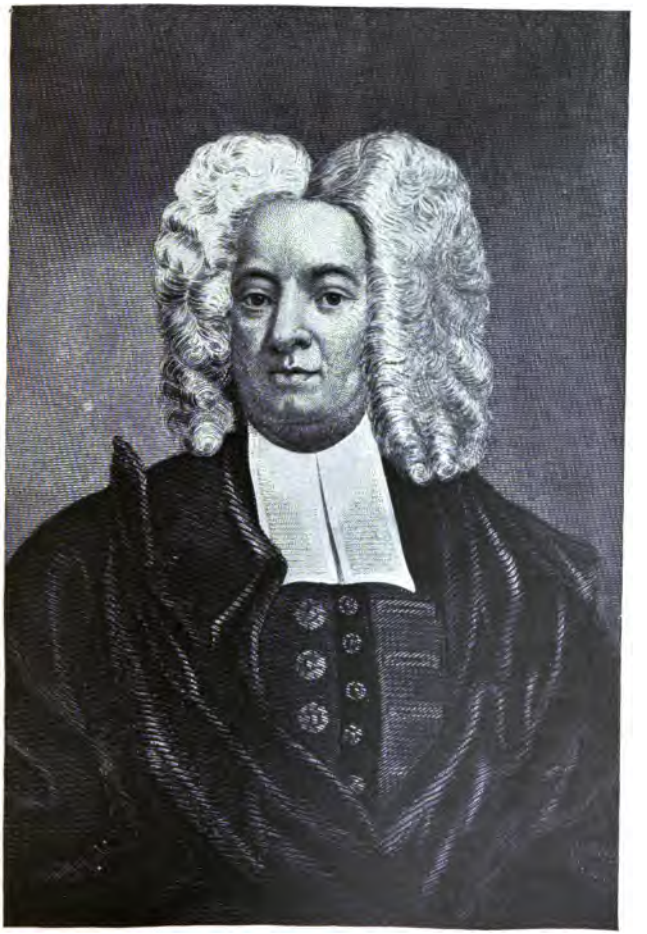
the youngest, became the most prominent New Englander of his time. Graduated from Harvard at seventeen, he preached at eighteen in his father's church, "when the whole auditory were greatly affected with the *light and flame* in which the rare youth appeared unto them; especially was his father so, who could scarce pronounce the blessing." He went at once abroad, where he took his Master's degree at Trinity College, Dublin, preached awhile in Devonshire and elsewhere, but gave way before the Restoration and returned to America. Here he married the daughter of John Cotton, whose surname was given to their first-born son.

Taking charge of the North Church in Boston, a pastorate in which he remained for sixty years, and presently adding to this burden the Presidency of Harvard, which he retained for sixteen years, Increase Mather held the chief influence in the colony. In him the sway of the old theocracy culminated. He moved, the commanding figure, through the political agitations of the time. The government of the New England settlements had, from the first, unconsciously looked toward independence. The Pilgrims, while yet on the "Mayflower," had by written compact organized themselves into "a civil body politic." The Puritans, soon after landing, subscribed to a solemn agreement. Under the original charter of Massachusetts, the freemen, who were the church members, elected the magistrates. The citizens, trained in the public schools and churches to intelligence and virtue, were educated in democratic methods by the

town-meeting. But under Charles II., when the colonists were faint and spent with the fierce struggle of King Philip's War, the charter of Massachusetts, after a long and passionate resistance, was annulled. Old England made a bad matter worse by a tone with which America grew later more familiar, and the blood of New England waxed hot: "And to complete the oppression, when they . . . claimed the privilege of *Englishmen*, they were scoffingly told, *Those things would not follow them to the ends of the earth.* Unnatural insult! Must the brave adventurer, who with the hazard of his life and fortune seeks out new climates to enrich his mother country, be denied those common rights, which his countrymen enjoy at home in ease and indolence?"

Sent to England as agent for the colony, Increase Mather saved what he could for Massachusetts from the wreck of her first liberties. He obtained from William of Orange a new charter, stricter than the old, but more liberal than those granted to most of the royal provinces. The colony of Plymouth was now incorporated with that of Massachusetts, where henceforth the governor and certain other officers were to be appointed by the king, while a property qualification for such franchise as remained was substituted for church membership. This provision it was which broke down the old theocracy. Increase Mather was the last of the clerical autocrats.

For a time, however, his son Cotton appeared no less



Cotton Mather.

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a personage. More precocious than his father, more prolific in books and pamphlets, he illustrates nevertheless the decline of the clergy both in outward power and in actual sanity and breadth of thought. As a mere child, trotting with solemn countenance to Master Cheever's school, he evinced the prig. "I began to *pray*," his record runs, "even when I began to speak. . . . I used *secret prayer*, not confining myself to *forms* in it: and yet I composed *forms of prayer* for my schoolmates (I suppose when I was about seven or eight years old) and obliged them to *pray*. . . . I rebuked my playmates for their wicked *words* and *ways;* and sometimes I suffered from them the persecution of not only *scoffs* but *blows* also, for my rebukes." We do not hear that his loss was keenly regretted when, at the age of twelve, widely read in Greek and Latin authors, he left school for Harvard. He was not nineteen on taking, from his father's hand, his second degree, his thesis being "Puncta Hebraica sunt Originis Divinæ." Within six months he was called to the North Church as his father's colleague. He prayed at his own ordination one hour and a quarter and preached for nearly two hours, — a sample of his quality which those bygone parishioners endured without flinching. Both Mathers died in this ministry, the father, fretful with failure, neglect, and infirmity, only five years before the son. Both were marvels of diligence, as became the scions of old Richard Mather, whose set of "Resolutions" included one against "excessive sleeping" and another against "misspending precious

time." But Increase Mather, although he often passed sixteen hours of the twenty-four in his study and printed during his lifedays nearly one hundred treatises and sermons, went in and out among men and dealt with open-air questions. Cotton was a bookworm, who lived to read, and read to write. His brother Nathaniel, pursuing a like course, died at nineteen. "While he thus devoured books, it came to pass that his books devoured him." Rarely there breaks from Cotton Mather the cry of human nature. "'Tis dreadful cold. My inkglass in my standish is froze and split in my very stove. My ink in my pen suffers a congelation." But for all the halting of his icy quill, on he wrote, putting forth from that eerie study, whose air was thick with visions, hard upon four hundred publications. Some were in French, Spanish, Indian, while his English, with its peppering of Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, its twisted phrases, tortured puns, and words of preposterous coinage, is no less a display of erudition. Sixty fasts, twenty-two vigils, and fourteen books made up his sheaf for a single year. Yet his groan was ever: "Alas, of my unfruitfulness!"

This judgment was more accurate than the judge himself suspected. That lean, ascetic figure, running under the lash of terrible effort, of unremitting discipline, was off the track of truth. For lack of that preserving salt, his tomes and tracts, like his father's, have practically perished. His learning had become a blur before his brain. His piety had forgotten mercy. The darkest

Jonathan Edwards

quality of Puritanism, the belief in a supernatural malice, deeply tinged the minds of both father and son. So sensible a man as Winthrop held that demons haunted the wilderness of the New World. Wigglesworth was confident that the devil had America for his peculiar "den." Increase Mather's most memorable book, *Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences*, hears Satan in the thunder storm. The chief writings of Cotton Mather, dealing as they largely do with the witchcraft murders, whose stain shows red upon his priestly garments, have small hold on human reverence. Yet men still turn with pleasure and profit the curious, uncritical pages of his *magnum opus*,

"That quaint *Magnalia Christi*, with all strange and marvellous things,
Heaped up huge and undigested, like the chaos Ovid sings."

XIV. **Jonathan Edwards** has fared better than Cotton Mather at the hands of posterity. Whatever may be thought of his theology, his was a shining spirit. At last, in the musings of a marvellous boy, New England strikes the note of æstheticism. The claims of art had as yet been scarcely recognized. Leaning gravestones and faded samplers tell a dismal tale of Puritan taste. The *Magnalia* mentions a "limner" who was settled in the colonies by 1667. In the early half of the eighteenth century, New Jersey had a Scotch portrait-painter, John Watson, who made what was probably the first collection of pictures in America. His little studio, with the shutters divided into squares, on each of which was

painted an heroic head, was the gazing-stock of the neighborhood. The first studio in Boston was opened by John Smybert, also a Scotchman. To him we owe a likeness of Jonathan Edwards, while to Pelham, another portrait-painter, who was, too, an engraver and teacher of drawing, we are indebted for that of Cotton Mather. Domestic architecture, however, was well advanced before the close of the Colonial period. Especially in the seaboard towns, enriched through the West Indian trade and favorably situated for the obtaining of material, the building of stately homes was much in vogue. Gambrelled and gabled roofs, white-pillared porches, diamond panes, fantastic knockers, sweet, old-fashioned gardens, still distinguish those early dwellings, within which that personal dignity of the Puritans, well becoming the elect of the Almighty, uttered itself in rich and handsome furnishings, — mahogany highboys glittering with brass handles, rows of figured china in divers colors, canopy beds with twisted posts, sideboards elaborately carved with vine-leaves and grape-baskets.

In no such elegance as this was the youth of Jonathan Edwards nurtured. The colony of Connecticut, whither Thomas Hooker, finding Massachusetts too small for John Cotton and himself, originally led his flock, had secured her charter-liberties through the polished diplomacy of her governor, John Winthrop the younger. In reality most prosperous of all the colonies, her fashions of life, especially in the smaller towns and villages, were frugal and modest. The East Windsor parsonage, where

Jonathan Edwards was the only boy among eleven children, could hardly have been luxurious, when the meeting-house was not even furnished with pews. Yale, from which he was graduated with highest honors before reaching the age of seventeen, had not so much as a fixed abode. Born with the eighteenth century, and speaking Latin from its birth, this hopeful young college, thriving in spite of its nomadic life, had early attracted the approval of Cotton Mather, who longed to see established there that inflexible orthodoxy from which, to the intense pain of his father and himself, Harvard was already departing.

But upon the eyes of the sensitive boy and spiritual student had dawned the vision of nature as the veil of God. This revelation sufficed his youth, making the spoils of wealth superfluous. When in his college notebook he defined *nothing* as "the same that the sleeping rocks do dream of," he held place among the poets. In those early days his soul walked the bright tablelands of Plato, of Spinoza, of St. John. He adored the glory of the Eternal, beholding in sun and field and river "emanations or shadows" of the divine Beauty, "the footsteps of His favor." This Spirit of God "overspread and cast abroad upon the whole earth and universe" he recognized as "infinite general love." As with maturing life he entered more and more into religious consciousness, as the "sense of divine things kindled a sweet burning" in his heart, his "calm rapture" was augmented. — "God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity

and love, seemed to appear in everything, — in the sun, moon, and stars; in clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature, which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for continuance, and in the day spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the meantime singing forth, with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer."

The wrench by which he brought himself into an acceptance of Calvinistic theology seems to have distorted all his development. "From my childhood up, my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom He would to eternal life, and rejecting whom He pleased, leaving them eternally to perish and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me." But apparently accounting it his duty to believe, he faced that tragic creed without blenching, until to his enthusiastic heart it took on a strange beauty of its own. "The doctrine has very often appeared exceedingly pleasant, bright, and sweet. But my first conviction was not so."

Installed as pastor over the Northampton church, wedded to a radiant girl with the spirit of a mystic and a devotee, he presents a twofold aspect. A preacher of wrath, terrifying his audiences with sermons unbearably graphic in their effort to impress his deep conviction that the "bulk of mankind do throng" to hell, with Augustine and Calvin conceiving God as the

one irresistible Will of a helpless universe, he wears nevertheless the halo of a saint. The words "sweetness and light," as frequent with him as with Matthew Arnold, describe him best. Into the dulness and formality of that latter-day Puritanism he shot such electric thrill of emotion as produced an extraordinary series of revivals, known as the Great Awakening. In general harmony with the work of Whitefield and the Wesleys, this conversion impulse shook all the colonies and spread to Scotland and England.

But their pillar of flame, a beacon in the land, was too hot for Northampton to bear. All the Colonial orthodoxy believed in original sin, election by free grace, and everlasting punishment. Governor Wolcott of Connecticut was deterred (poetically) from suicide by

"Hell's flashes folding through eternity."

But these doctrines, never silent in our honest old pulpits, were preached by Edwards with unexampled and unendurable vividness. Did he never remember, when assuring his shuddering congregation that God held them "over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire," how in his fresh boyhood he had been "very conversant with spiders," loving to watch the "wondrous way of their working" and finding "everything belonging to this insect admirable"? The church of Northampton, after the excitement of the Great Awakening had ebbed, turned upon their pastor, much as Boston baited the

Mathers after the witchcraft madness, and thrust him out, — an event then unexampled in the New England ministry. Patiently and humbly he went forty miles to the west, as missionary to the Stockbridge Indians, on the extreme frontier. What the red men learned from the metaphysician it would be interesting to know, but there it was, in such rude and wild surroundings, that this master of subtle logic wrote his famous treatise on the *Freedom of the Will*, which virtually denies to man the power of choice. At fifty-four, he reluctantly emerged from his Stockbridge retirement, so fruitful in thought and writing, to assume the presidency of Princeton College, then scarcely more than a decade in age. A few weeks later he died.

In the school of theology which Edwards founded, his high conception of God's sovereignty has already been brought to co-exist with a happier view of human destinies, but his definition of religion, like his practice, has hardly been bettered: "True religion in a great measure consists in holy affections. A love of divine things for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency is the spring of all holy affections."

Edwards's early meditations set straight toward idealism. He spoke a common language with Berkeley, although it is doubtful whether the young Northampton preacher, isolated by poverty and the difficulties of Colonial travel, even once visited the distinguished English philosopher during that mysterious residence of three years at Newport. It is possible, indeed, so

thick was the wall of provincialism, that Edwards was ignorant alike of Berkeley's presence in New England and of the existence of Berkeley's views as such. But apart from the special tenets of the schools, in that ascetic, God-enraptured life of Jonathan Edwards the essential ideality of Puritanism is seen at its clearest. Men who, dwelling in hazard on the edge of the primeval forest, could absorb themselves in hot discussions over the validity of infant baptism, were legitimate ancestors not only of Edwards, but of Channing and Emerson. The Transcendentalists, beneath dogma, are at one with the Calvinists. Earth, to the vision of both, is shadow and dream; spirit alone is reality.

# CHAPTER II

## THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

Over the roofs of the pioneers
Gathers the moss of a hundred years;
On man and his works has passed the change
Which needs must be in a century's range.
The land lies open and warm in the sun,
Anvils clamor and mill-wheels run, —
Flocks on the hillsides, herds on the plain,
The wilderness gladdened with fruit and grain!

* * * * * * * *

Everywhere is the grasping hand,
And eager adding of land to land;
And earth, which seemed to the fathers meant
But as a pilgrim's wayside tent, —
A nightly shelter to fold away
When the Lord should call at the break of day, —
Solid and steadfast seems to be,
And Time has forgotten Eternity!

But fresh and green from the rotting roots
Of primal forests the young growth shoots;
From the death of the old the new proceeds,
And the life of truth from the rot of creeds:
On the ladder of God, which upward leads,
The steps of progress are human needs.

— WHITTIER, *The Preacher*.

I. **Aspect of the Times.** — As the theme of our Colonial literature is theology, so, and in no less degree, the theme of our Revolutionary literature is politics. The

attention of the colonists was turned from heaven to earth. The change had been gradual. From the outset there was in New England a democracy of common sense and common virtues disposed, on occasion, to check the theocracy. It was the protest of the plain people that put an end to the flogging of Quakers and hanging of witches. Relinquishing theology more and more to the care of the clergy, the laity of the eighteenth century set actively about the establishing of a sound material basis for the new American civilization. While Cotton Mather was rapt by visions of winged angels in his study, and Jonathan Edwards was enfolded in a "calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of the world," sailors of Cape Cod were throwing the harpoon in Arctic seas, and Newport merchants, who would have been none the worse for more religion, were importing molasses and sugar from the West Indies to make the rum exchanged on the coast of Africa for negroes that were sold again in Barbados.

The colonies, which by the middle of the century numbered thirteen, fell naturally into three groups. The aristocratic Old Dominion, living carelessly off her tobacco crop and cultivating the graces and dignities of life, had the Carolinas, Maryland, and Georgia for neighbors. Maryland, colonized under Roman Catholic auspices and originally the one province where religious toleration was secured by law, had established the Episcopal Church and disfranchised her Roman Catholics. Her schools were few and poor and her higher life ap-

parently stagnant. With the English settlers of the Carolinas had mingled various sturdy Protestant elements, notably Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and French Huguenots. Into North Carolina, Virginia had shaken off what she could of her vagabonds and ruffians, so that, up to the time of the Revolution, this colony was disorderly, lazy, and ignorant. South Carolina, notwithstanding her bad name for smuggling and piracy, fared better. Her planters, enriched by their rice and indigo, corn and cotton, lived gayly in Charleston, while troops of negroes, many fresh from the slave-ships, worked out short and sickly lives in the malarial swamps. The youngest of the thirteen colonies, Georgia, settled in 1732 under the leadership of the humane Oglethorpe, was founded for the express purpose of giving another chance in life to the unfortunates of the Old World, especially the poor debtors of the London jails. The Wesleys and Whitefield exhorted there but for a season, the effort to exclude slavery and rum proved Utopian, and the novel mission, which attracted, to balance its weaklings, some excellent constituents in Scots, Germans, and English Quakers, presently slipped off the philanthropic apron-strings and began to make its own mundane way in agriculture, cattle-raising, and commerce. Although brick-kilns, ship-yards, iron furnaces, and mills of various sorts might be found, for the seeking, below Mason and Dixon's line, the South was, broadly speaking, without manufactures. Its wealth lay in its natural products. Similarly, while destitute of literature, it was rich in the

raw material of literature, — in life. Williamsburg was the focus of a blithe and polished society. There "the violins seemed to be ever playing." There the planter's son, a superlative dandy in powdered peruke and gold-threaded waistcoat, doffed his cocked hat with its flaunting feather to the soft-voiced Virginian maidens so languidly that it would have taken a keen eye to detect, beneath furbelows and foppery, the steel temper of the Revolution close at hand. Beside the strenuous studies and varied business activities of the North, the southern oligarchy looked idle and frivolous, yet the fox-hunting, horse-racing, dancing, and duelling went to the making of heroes.

The Middle Colonies comprised New York, of Dutch tradition, New Jersey, with population variously compounded of Dutch, Quakers, and Puritans, Pennsylvania, where the welcome of the Friends was broad enough for all peoples and all sects, and Delaware, planted by the Swedes. The main employment of the Middle Colonies was the production of food-stuffs, especially grain. On the large, fertile farms, German and Irish bond-servants, working out their passage dues, indentured convicts from Great Britain, and African slaves toiled together, under the oversight of their rustic masters. The fur-trade with the Indians was extensive. New York and Philadelphia were thriving seaports. Merchants abounded in the towns, and throughout the country districts shop-keepers, peddlers, and mechanics were thickly sprinkled in among the tillers of the soil. Shipbuilding flourished, and the

iron industry was well under way. Notwithstanding the selfish legislation of the English Parliament, which strove to compel the colonists to bring their raw material to British markets in barter for the products of British factories, there existed in the Middle Colonies, as in New England, a few manufactures for domestic use, while the spinning-wheel and loom were busy in a thousand homes. This work-a-day life had not the social charm of the South, nor the intellectual energy of the East, although there was fashion in the towns, and education, especially in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, was not altogether neglected; but while emphasis was put on the practical and the utilitarian, on bread alone, the polyglot character of the population and the Quaker leaven of tolerance favored that development witnessed to-day, when the cosmopolitan city of New York holds rank as the literary no less than the financial metropolis of the United States.

New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, all offshoots from Massachusetts, bore a close family resemblance to the parent colony. "Little Rhody" was the bad child of the household, restless, greedy, and unruly, but these sorry traits she gradually outgrew. From granite hillside and stormy sea the tough Puritans wrested their first prosperity, but soon added to their fisheries and agriculture a very canny trade. This circular commerce gathered up in its coasting craft provisions, furs, and lumber from the neighboring colonies and carried these exports to Great Britain, the West Indies, and such few continental markets as

Parliament's jealous Navigation Acts left open. The return cargoes, largely English fabrics and other manufactured wares, were bartered again, at a Yankee profit, in the Colonial ports. If every New England merchant was a money-maker, every farmer was a Jack of all trades, as much at home in cobbling a pair of shoes as in criticising a sermon. Brother Jonathan's "cuteness" was already in evidence. A cider-press stood handy to his apple-orchard. His live stock knew the smell of his tannery. The shyest mountain-streams, with the wildest Indian names, found themselves turning the wheels of his saw-mill and grist-mill. If his sheep sharpened their noses picking out grassblades between the rocks, his homespun suit was none the worse for it. A dozen factories were gathered into his farmhouse kitchen, where thin-lipped women baked and brewed, washed and ironed, canned and pickled, compounded the family physic of "snail-water," with ruby jellies to obliterate its taste, spun, wove, knit, quilted, made candles, soap, sausages, rag-carpets, feather-beds, and were by turns seamstresses, milliners, tailors, with frequent calls away to dairy, poultry-yard, and milking-stool. For the young men and maidens, after the "chores" came husking-bee or spelling-match, and the children trudged barefoot in summer and coasted in winter to the rough little school-house that was never quite out of reach.

Such, in birdseye view, were the thirteen Colonial units, which, by the time they achieved independence

and union, numbered toward three millions of people, perhaps one-fifth speaking languages other than English, mainly Dutch, French, German, Swedish, and about the same proportion being of negro blood. The blacks, for industrial rather than moral reasons, were chiefly in the section of rice-swamp and cotton-field. In New England and the Middle Colonies the general trend of life was democratic. Labor was held more honorable than idleness. In the South there were sharp distinctions of caste.

II. **Benjamin Franklin** is typical of this new American era. Only three years younger than Jonathan Edwards, Boston-born and Boston-bred, the Puritan temper had absolutely no hold upon him. Out of all the priestly writing of the times, he assimilated only Cotton Mather's *Essays to do Good*, but the suggestion of that one book he took into his very pith. He was the Abou ben Adhem of his times. If service is the test of love, few men have loved their fellows better than did this unsentimental, unspiritual, homely old body, America's patron saint of common-sense.

Alone among the great Revolutionary leaders, Franklin was of humble origin. Little he minded that. "A ploughman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees." His mother's father was Peter Folger of Nantucket, whose "homespun verse . . . in favor of liberty of conscience" the grandson approved as "written with a good deal of decent plainness and manly freedom." This was a handsome concession for Franklin, who

Benj. Franklin

in general considered poetry "the mere waste-paper of mankind." His father was of North-England yeoman stock, of a family where for generations the eldest son had succeeded to the anvil with less interruption and perhaps no less pride than attended the royal succession to the throne. Tudors and Stuarts came and went, while the Franklins hammered on.

Franklin's father, a soap-boiler and tallow-chandler, who, after the day's work was done, would play psalm tunes on his violin, to the delectation of his seventeen children, wished to devote Benjamin, "as the tithe of his sons," to the ministry. The prudent goodman changed his mind, however, on considering the expense of a college education "and the mean living many so educated were afterwards able to obtain." After a scanty two years of schooling, the boy was taken home to help in moulding candles, — an occupation for which, notwithstanding its eminent usefulness, he conceived a strong dislike. *Pilgrim's Progress* and Plutarch's *Lives* were his consolation. Observing this bookish tendency, the father, apprehensive lest his discontented little chandler should run away to sea, had him bound, at twelve, apprentice to an elder son James, a printer. In this craft Franklin soon excelled, and his love of reading grew apace. He even tried his hand at ballad-writing, but his father's hint that "verse-makers were generally beggars" promptly put an end to that. On his father's suggestion, the boy undertook learning how to write good prose. An odd volume of the *Spectator*

was his academy. He succeeded so well that his *Silence Dogood* essays, — Addisonian trifles on such varied themes as *Widows*, *Boston at Night*, *Poetry in New England*, *Match-Making*, — slipped anonymously under the printing-house door, were published in his brother's newspaper, the *New England Courant*.

The first printing-press of America had been set up at Cambridge under Harvard control, in 1639. During the last quarter of that century, presses appeared, one by one, at Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. In the third decade of the century following, Annapolis, Williamsburg, and Charleston successively went into the printing business, and by 1762, when a press was established at Savannah, the last of the thirteen colonies was ready to print its own books, provided it had any books to print. Boston and Philadelphia, however, by aid of the Franklins, took and kept the lead.

The seventeenth century had witnessed a solitary attempt at American journalism. In 1690 there appeared at Boston the first and last and only number of *Public Occurrences*, six eleven-inch columns, whose projectors designed "that the country shall be furnished once a month (or if any glut of occurrences happen, oftener) with an account of such considerable things as have arrived unto our notice." This ambitious venture was forthwith suppressed by government. The more fortunate *News-Letter*, a weekly, first issued at Boston in 1704, was supplemented after fifteen years by the *Boston Gazette*, printed by James Franklin. At the same time, Phila-

delphia started the *American Weekly Mercury* and, two years later, James Franklin began to publish the *New England Courant.* There was no American daily until 1771, when, at Philadelphia, the *Pennsylvania Packet* led the way. By this time New England had about a dozen newspapers, the Middle Colonies an equal number, and the Southern scarcely less. In all this Colonial development of the printing and publishing industry, the influence of the Franklins was supreme.

Benjamin transferred his labors from Boston to Philadelphia because of the bad tempers of James, whose rough words and rougher beatings roused in his junior, long before the Revolution, the spirit of rebellion against arbitrary power. Smarting from brotherly blows, the apprentice ran away at seventeen to the city of Brotherly Love. As the young Yankee walked coolly down Chestnut Street, with two "great puffy rolls" under his arms, eating a third, Philadelphia little realized that her mightiest citizen, the bread-man of the era, was making his début. It was characteristic, also, that two of his three rolls the budding philanthropist gave away to a hungry woman and child.

Ten years sufficed to put him in the full tide of his career. He had pursued his trade for eighteen months in London, where an early bent toward free-thinking was confirmed, had returned to Philadelphia, opened a printing-house, bought the *Pennsylvania Gazette,* and become the foremost publisher in the colony. He was now equipped for his peculiar mission of training the Ameri-

can character to a mastery of practical life. An apostle of frugality, industry, and temperate living, he occupied two secular pulpits, — his newspaper and his almanac. Through the first he did much to shape the popular mind on public questions. From politics, commerce, finance and political economy he took his weekly texts. But his *Poor Richard* penetrated to thousands of rustic firesides the country over, and was thumbed ragged by households who had, perhaps, no other reading, save the Bible, from one January to the next.

Almanacs were the main reliance of our pioneer publishing houses. In a year when the three Philadelphia presses issued a total of thirteen books, seven were almanacs. It was for 1733 that Franklin prepared the first of his long series, under the name, for a ruse, of a noted almanac-maker in England, Richard Saunders. This little pamphlet contained, in addition to the regular calculations and weather predictions, a sly preface, giving a realistic glimpse of Dame Bridget, and such varied spicing as "Verses, Jests and Sayings . . . Bachelor's Folly, Parson's Wine and Baker's Pudding, Short Visits, Kings and Bears, New Fashions, Game for Kisses . . . Signs of a Tempest, Death a Fisherman, Conjugal Debate, Men and Melons, . . . Breakfast in Bed." But the irresistible feature of the new almanac was its peppering of maxims, original and borrowed. While Poor Richard's prefaces, anecdotes, and even his verses delighted the public, year by year, for a quarter of a century, his proverbs were driven, like so many quaintly-

carven pegs, deep into the American mind. They inculcated prudence, — "Little boats should keep near shore," and persistency, — "Little strokes fell large oaks." They proclaimed the gospel of hard work, — "God helps them that help themselves," "Plough deep while sluggards sleep," "Handle your tools without mittens; the cat in gloves catches no mice," "Diligence is the mother of good luck," "Laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes him." Such sententious brevity, such tricks of rhyme, antithesis, and especially of word-picture, using the concrete image for conveying the abstract truth, captured attention and memory through continual surprises. Even the dullest Dutch farmer might have wearied of the two words: "Practise thrift," and so Franklin draped his cardinal doctrine in all manner of droll disguises, — "Silks and satins put out the kitchen fire," "A small leak will sink a great ship," "Who dainties love shall beggars prove," "If you would know the value of money, go and try to borrow some, for he that goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing," "Light purse, heavy heart," "Lying rides upon debt's back," "'Tis hard for an empty bag to stand upright." Sometimes, but rarely, he strikes the deeper life-note, — "The doors of wisdom are never shut," "When you taste honey, remember gall." Often his words are sharpened by the quiet irony still so innate in Yankee speech, — "He that falls in love with himself will know no rivals," "Many foxes grow gray, but few grow good," "There are no ugly loves, nor handsome

prisons." In general Poor Richard preaches only a worldly-wise philosophy, — "Deny self for self's sake," "Rob not God, nor the poor, lest thou ruin thyself."

Franklin's almanacs, selling at the rate of ten thousand a year, travelled from colony to colony and across the ocean. It is estimated that *Poor Richard*, the preface to the 1758 almanac, gathering up the best of the proverbs in a final discourse, has been printed at least four hundred times. French editions are almost as numerous as English. The homely counsels of the tallow-chandler's son have been rendered into well-nigh every European language. But "a good example is the best sermon," and Franklin's personality is more instructive even than his aphorisms.

This personality is revealed with candor and complacency in his delightful *Autobiography*, supplemented by his correspondence. His style is clear as crystal, shot with glancing lights of humor, yet preserving throughout the tranquil dignity of a man who, writing about himself, thoroughly respects his subject. He had reason. In him we have our first illustrious example of such a career as it is America's peculiar pride to foster, — the rise from poverty, obscurity, and ignorance to a station of highest honor and influence through a man's sheer power of brain, conscience, heart, and will. Thoughtful, upright, kindly, determined from the first, Franklin disciplined himself, educated himself, enriched himself, and made himself the greatest social force of his time. "He that can have patience can have what he will." At forty-two

Franklin had amassed an honorable fortune and retired from business to devote himself to politics and scientific investigation.

The atmosphere of Pennsylvania was favorable to science. The Quaker colony was more liberal than Massachusetts. From the figure of William Penn, standing under Treaty Elm, his blue silk sash about his waist and a crescent of wild Indians before him, radiated a tradition of tolerance. Bartram's botanical garden on the Schuylkill was famed in Europe. The medical profession, well advanced in the Middle Colonies, was headed by Dr. Rush of Philadelphia. Rittenhouse was known for his scientific studies as well as for his scientific instruments. But the achievement of Franklin outranked them all. Up toward the thunder-clouds, awful to Puritan thought, he cast his sacrilegious kite and caught the lightning, which our own day harnesses to street cars and sets to illuminating saloons.

Franklin's electrical experiments, that made him honored across the sea, a doctor of Oxford and of St. Andrews, a member of the Royal Society of England and of the French Academy, were interspersed with practical inventions. While the people, as the people will, abused and glorified him by fits, Franklin good-humoredly cured their smoky chimneys, brought them home English vegetables and French vines to plant, devised the Franklin stove, for which he would take out no patent, bettered their printing-presses, ship-rigging, carriage wheels, windmills, and roofs. To these last he

affixed the protection of lightning rods, decried not a little as "an impious attempt to control the artillery of heaven." He lent a hand to all good works from hospital reform to drilling a Quaker militia. He inaugurated far-reaching intellectual agencies, — the public library, the magazine, the postal service. He founded the American Philosophical Society and the University of Pennsylvania. He initiated in Philadelphia so many conveniences of the modern city, pavements, street-crossings, fire-companies, police, that one is not surprised to find it, at the close of the Revolutionary War, the metropolis of the new nation, with thirty-two thousand inhabitants and over four thousand homes.

Franklin's political career began with the clerkship of the Pennsylvania Assembly, of which he soon became a member. As early as 1754, he proposed a plan for Colonial union that was displeasing to the colonies as conceding too much power to the English government, and affronted the English government as allowing too much independence to the colonies. Franklin philosophically consoled himself for his failure by concluding, from the double opposition, that the scheme must have been a good one. Three years later he was sent to England as special commissioner for Pennsylvania, and there, in the main, he stayed until 1775, doing his best to avert the inevitable crisis. His attitude toward the idea of a violent separation was conservative, although he bore himself with unflinching yet easy firmness before a suspicious Parliament and a hostile king. His staunch patriotism

was worn as quietly as an old coat. He urged conciliatory measures, advising Boston, for example, to pay the East India Company for the salted tea. The author of *Poor Richard*, indeed, could hardly have been expected to approve such a waste of herb. His own words explain his position : "Long did I endeavor, with unfeigned and unwearied zeal, to preserve from breaking that fine and noble china vase, the British empire; for I knew that, once broken, the separate parts could not ever retain their share of the strength or value that existed in the whole, and that a perfect re-union could scarce ever be hoped for."

But when the crash came, Franklin stood shoulder to shoulder with Samuel Adams. For ten years following, the genial philosopher rendered the national cause inestimable services in France, where he was hugely popular, and where his well-seasoned tact and sagacity proved equal to every diplomatic strain. His political prominence may be gathered from the fact that he was the only American statesman to sign all four of the crucial documents, the Declaration of Independence, the Treaty of Alliance with France, the Treaty of Peace with Great Britain, and the Constitution of the United States. To the end he kept in advance of the times, death finding the old man busy with measures for the abolition of slavery.

Long residence in England, and especially in France, emphasized a native breadth of mind. "Orthodoxy is my doxy, and heterodoxy is your doxy." But while he

held with the prevailing philosophy of the eighteenth century, that happiness is the human end and aim, Franklin's Puritan birthmark shows in his view that such "felicity of life" is to be attained through "truth, sincerity, and integrity in dealings between man and man." Moulded from honest red clay, without wings of passion and poetry, his thoughts rising heavenward only the length of his kite string, Franklin yet repented, in mellow age, all unholy (and expensive) dissipations of his youth, and added a limited measure of faith to his overflowing measure of works: "Here is my creed: I believe in one God, the Creator of the universe; that He governs it by His providence; that He ought to be worshipped; that the most acceptable service we render to Him is doing good to His other children; that the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this."

In Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin, the two world-redeeming forces of spiritual aspiration and practical benevolence come into the sharpest contrast that our literature affords.

III. **The Orators.** — Although the initial wave of religious enthusiasm, which would have founded on the wild shores of America a very kingdom of God, seemed, for the hour, lost in the Revolutionary surge of patriotic passion, it is easy to recognize the same essential impulse in the two. John Wise, the fighting parson of Ipswich, had said in 1710: "Englishmen hate an arbitrary power (politically considered) as they hate the devil." And

when the colonies slowly awoke to the conviction that the home government was dealing with them in selfish and tyrannic wise, the Puritans of New England took the lead in fiery resistance. Up the broad stairways of the grand Colonial mansions, stairways beautiful with carven balusters and grooved or twisted newels, trod the descendants of the log-cabin pioneers, but the frown of the living brows proved their kinship to the stern portraits hung above the landings. The Revolutionary dames, who dressed their hair in thirteen curls, wore calicoes stamped with portraits of Washington and Franklin, and drank no tea, only followed where the heroines of the "Mayflower" and the "Arbella" had led. Fittingly did Ethan Allen demand the surrender of Ticonderoga "In the name of the great Jehovah, and the Continental Congress." "If to appear for my country is treason," rang out the words of young JOSIAH QUINCY, "and to arm for her defence is rebellion, — like my fathers, I will glory in the name of rebel and traitor, as they did in that of puritan and enthusiast."

This ardent patriot, a man so sound of judgment and of conscience that, amid all the excitement following the Boston Massacre, he consented, with John Adams, to undertake the defence of the British captain and soldiers accused, died of consumption, on shipboard, just after the "embattled farmers" at Concord bridge

"fired the shot heard round the world."

A more tragic fate than this, or than that of his close

friend Warren, who fell at Bunker Hill, overwhelmed another of the Massachusetts orators, JAMES OTIS. Fifteen years before the Declaration of Independence, his impetuous eloquence protested in the court-room against the revenue search warrants, known as "writs of assistance," with such effect as to arouse in his hearers a lasting determination to resist laws not of their own making nor for their own benefit. The following year, in Assembly debate on the question of payment exacted by the royal authority, Otis flung forth such fearless words as these: "It would be of little consequence to the people whether they were subject to George or Louis, the king of Great Britain or the French king, if both were arbitrary, as both would be, if both could levy taxes without Parliament." His work was ended in 1769, when he fell victim to a cowardly assault made upon him in a coffee-house by a group of his political enemies. From the injured brain the reason slowly ebbed, and it was a merciful lightning-flash that, fourteen years later, struck down the long-silenced orator, who had once been likened by John Adams to "a flame of fire."

With the fragmentary and uncertain echoes of the speeches of Quincy and Otis have come down snatches of patriotic eloquence from that "chief incendiary," SAMUEL ADAMS, a politician sage and incorruptible, the earliest and most persistent advocate of Independence, the dauntless leader of the Boston democracy, and the only man excepted from the amnesty offered to the

colonists by England in 1774. But the palm of Revolutionary oratory falls to the South, to the trumpeter of the rank of great Virginians, PATRICK HENRY. "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery! Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death."

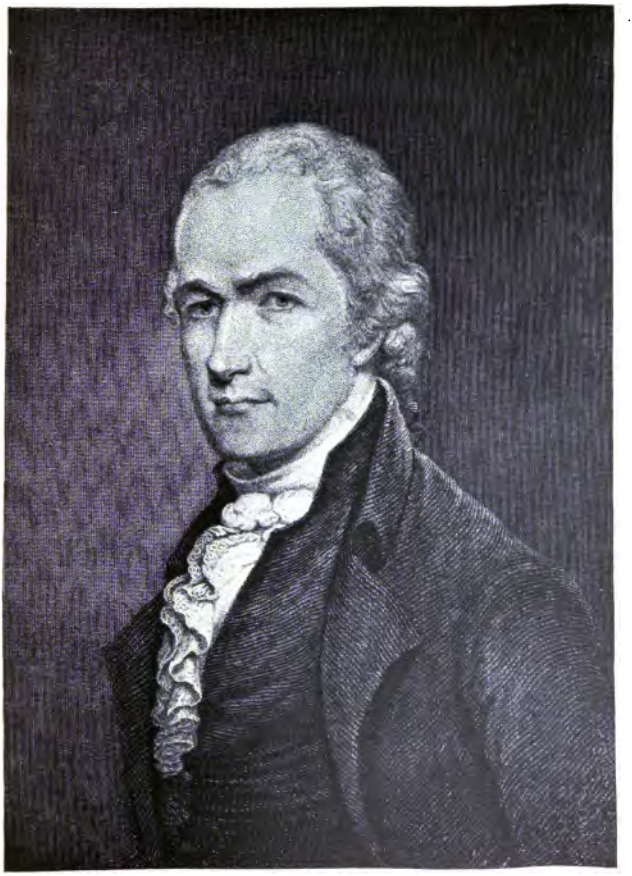
IV. **The Statesmen.** — "Great men come in clusters," and at the hour of America's need, the historic arena seems thronged with figures of heroic proportions, — orators, generals, statesmen, embodying the garnered thought and passion not merely of their own land and era, but of liberty itself.

> "In such men
> Mankind doth live: they are such souls as these
> That move the world."

Yet, just as these stately personages of a bygone century have something of a quaint, theatrical look in their gold-laced hats and powdered hair, their suits of sky-color satin and peach-blossom velvet, so their magnificent sentences, even the sonorous roll of the opening periods in the Declaration of Independence, seem florid and grandiloquent in comparison with the simpler style in favor now. But criticism is hushed before that majestic company marshalled by Washington.

> "Virginia gave us this imperial man
> Cast in the massive mould
> Of those high-statured ages old
> Which into grander forms our mortal metal ran."

Washington's correspondence and *Farewell Address* would scarcely, from another, constitute a claim to literary renown. That age of statesmanship, when men's thoughts were centred on questions of government, of the political, financial, commercial policy to be adopted by the new nation, reared for itself but one literary monument of impressive proportions, *The Federalist*. This is a collection of eighty-five essays, skilful, cogent, convincing, originally printed, usually in the *Independent Journal* of New York, through the fall and winter of 1787–88, over the common signature of *Publius*. The writers were ALEXANDER HAMILTON, the most able political thinker of the time, whose financial genius originated our national banking system, JAMES MADISON of Virginia, who drafted the Constitution, and JOHN JAY of New York, first Chief-Justice of the United States. These essays constitute a continuous argument in favor of the proposed Constitution. Two questions were chiefly at issue, — that of the relative power to be accorded to the Federal and State governments and that of the degree to which the popular will was to be expressed in the control of national policy. Hamilton, the head of the Federalist party, was of foreign birth, son of a Scotch merchant resident in the West Indies. His marriage into one of the proudest old Dutch families of New York had confirmed an aristocratic bias. He counted the people, in his own phrase, "a great beast." In his view, a strong central authority was essential to the stability of the nation.



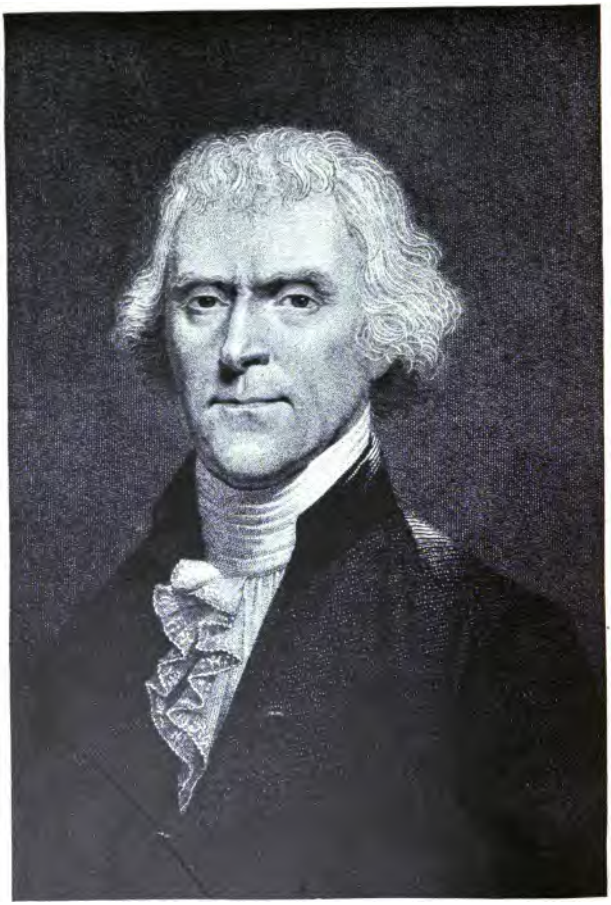
A Hamilton

Under the inefficient Continental Congress and the loose Confederation that succeeded it, the states were virtually independent. The Constitution, with its plan for a Senate representing the State legislatures and a Lower House representing the whole people, proposed a compromise between State Rights and Federal authority, — a compromise which has stood the working test of one hundred years. On the companion question, as to how far the will of the sovereign people should be limited by the Upper House and the Presidential veto, Hamilton declared for a system of checks and balances. Here, as in the matter of State Rights, he was strenuously opposed by THOMAS JEFFERSON, who came in 1801 to be third President, succeeding that vehement Federalist, JOHN ADAMS of Boston.

Jefferson, like Washington and Madison and the bitter-tongued anti-Federalist orator, John Randolph of Roanoke, sprang from the high-spirited aristocracy of Virginia. After two years of William and Mary College, he entered upon the study of the law. North and south, it was an age of lawyers. The makers of the nation had good training for their task. In his twenty-seventh year Jefferson entered the House of Burgesses and was presently in the front of the patriotic struggle. The Declaration of Independence was mainly of his authorship. He was governor of Virginia when it was invaded by the traitor, Benedict Arnold, and, later, by Cornwallis. He succeeded Franklin as minister to France, where he was a sympathetic witness of the first pure aspiration for

"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Returning to America before the ideals of '89 were dimmed in the brutal tyranny of the Reign of Terror, he became the foremost American champion of democracy. Owner of several plantations and many slaves, he had nevertheless expressed, even before his residence in France, his hope for "a total emancipation." In 1776, the eminent Virginians in general deprecated slavery, although cotton-growing states and the slave-importing state of Rhode Island were so sensitive to such criticism that Jefferson's fervid paragraph arraigning George III. for promoting "this execrable commerce" had to be stricken out from the Declaration of Independence.

In Washington's cabinet, where Hamilton sat as Secretary of the Treasury and Jefferson as Secretary of State, the great Federalist and the great Democrat fought out their controversy as to the legitimate powers of the central government. The struggle did not cease when Jefferson became President, nor even when, in 1804, Hamilton's brilliant career met its untimely end in a duel with Aaron Burr, that shifty politician whose name stands dark against the saintly memory of his grandfather, Jonathan Edwards. The Hamiltonian principles essentially prevailed. The loose confederacy of states took form as a representative republic. The doctrine of State Rights has since made its appeal to arms and been finally rejected, but Jefferson's advocacy of the "rights of man," of the ultimate sovereignty of the people, has borne fruit in the steady democratizing of our social and political institutions.



Th. Jefferson

Jefferson's *Autobiography* and his *Notes on Virginia* suggest that he might have achieved distinction as an author, had the claims of active life been less. His love of letters found expression in his establishment of the University of Virginia, in which he made special provision for English studies. He had the literary temperament and wielded the most facile pen of any statesman of his generation, although his personal friend and political opponent, John Adams, stood not far behind him in constant ease and occasional power of style.

V. **Poetical Experiments.** — The Revolutionary period had too much stirring business on hand to cultivate the arts. "Literary accomplishments," wrote young Joel Barlow to his classmate, Noah Webster, "will not be so much noticed till sometime after the settlement of peace, and the people become more refined. More blustering characters must bear sway at present, and the hardy veterans must retire from the field before the philosopher can retire to the closet."

This JOEL BARLOW was a leader among the "Hartford Wits," an informal club of wide-awake young Federalists, who penned satiric verse on party questions and formed the one literary group of the era. Barlow's career ranges from the Continental army, where he served, while yet a Yale undergraduate, as soldier, and, later, as chaplain, to Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. Involved in this by chance, Barlow perished of exhaustion. Between these violent extremes he had known law, journalism, and the diplomatic service. This last brought about a

residence of many years in France, and a consequent conversion to democracy. A quieter lot fell to TIMOTHY DWIGHT. He, too, was a Yale man, who forsook his tutor's desk to study law, and dropped his law-books to serve as chaplain in the army. A grandson of Jonathan Edwards, his later life was appropriately divided between a pastorate at Greenfield in Connecticut and the Presidency of Yale College. Dwight had been graduated from Yale at seventeen, — an achievement which pales before that of JOHN TRUMBULL, who passed the entrance examinations at seven. After two years of tutoring at Yale, Trumbull studied law with John Adams, and became, in time, judge of the superior court. These three scholars, ardent patriots all, were ambitious to endow their young Columbia,

"The queen of the world, and the child of the skies,"

with an equipment of epic poems which should put her at her ease beside Greece and Rome, England and Italy. Barlow, by the poetic building of a quarter-century, reared a huge *Columbiad*. In this the aged discoverer of the western hemisphere, led from his dungeon by Hesper to a mount of vision, sweeps the continent with his gaze and beholds the changing pageant of American story, from Cortez to Washington, with prophetic glimpses of an all-glorious future. The idea was borrowed from Milton and the verse from Pope; the patriotism was original. Dwight chose a Biblical subject, *The Conquest of Canaan*, but even among the wars of

Israel he made shift to introduce battles and personages of the Revolution. This was dedicated, as were many of the productions of the day, to Washington, who had already learned to acknowledge such presentation volumes with the prompt assurance that he expected to enjoy them greatly, when he should find time for their perusal.

It may be said of these two lengthy and dreary epics, as Dwight sang of his countrymen,

> "Refinement of the heart
> Illumes the general mass."

Both are little more than bad copies of stilted eighteenth-century English models. Dwight frankly declares, in the preface to a rambling poem of the reflective order, *Greenfield Hill*, dealing with the scenes about his parish, that he had proposed to imitate in its several books the respective styles of as many selected British bards. We catch a fresher note in Barlow's humorous *Hasty-Pudding:*

> "I sing the sweets I know, the charms I feel,
> My morning incense and my evening meal —
> * * * * * * * *
> Ev'n in thy native regions, how I blush
> To hear the Pennsylvanians call thee *Mush!*"

Trumbull's *McFingal*, the only one of the three Hartford epics still enjoyable, is original in substance, though imitative in form. It is, in fact, modelled so closely and so cleverly on Butler's *Hudibras* that couplets of the one

might easily be mistaken as belonging to the other. The hero, in the American satire, is not a Puritan bent on the destruction of the English Maypoles, but a Tory, sallying out with fell intent to cut down those liberty poles which still adorn the village greens of New England. Lively, sensible, and keen, the poem merited its popularity. More than thirty pirated editions were put upon the market. In *The Progress of Dulness* Trumbull turned his satire against American education. He essayed the ode so far as to assure his two epic friends that future years would admire

> "Barlow's strong flight, and Dwight's Homeric fire,"

and he wrote elegies largely plagiarized from Gray.

The *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, indeed, furnished not only verse, tone, and situation, but actual phrases to more than one funereal effusion of the time. Among the poems of that phenomenal negro girl, PHILLIS WHEATLEY, a petted slave in a Boston family, is an elegy on Whitefield, two consecutive stanzas running thus:

> "Cou'd Virtue charm the dull cold ear of Death,
> Or pow'rs capacious stay the fatal blow,
> Cou'd innate goodness stop the fleeting breath,
> WHITEFIELD, thou still had bless'd a world below.
>
> Still hadst thou shone, to guide th' aspiring mind,
> To bid Religion's streams serenely roll,
> Her ample heights or latent tracts to find,
> And swell the genial current of the soul."

That a wild little black, who stood, a frail child of

seven, in the Boston slave-market of 1761, clad in a rag of old carpeting, with a dim memory in her frightened heart of a far-away pagan mother pouring out water in worship before the sun at his rising, should have been enabled, by a dozen years of Christian nurture, to produce this volume of fluent, pious, decorous verse, pranked out with all the literary elegancies of the day, is still a puzzle and an astonishment. Her mind-stuff must have been at once singularly rich and singularly plastic — malleable gold of the Dark Continent. Her subjection to an alien civilization is pathetic. The rare song-bird of Africa was thoroughly tamed in her Boston cage. Very meekly she writes: "On the Death of a Young Lady of five Years of Age," "Thoughts on the Works of Providence," "To the Rev. Dr. Thomas Amory on reading his Sermons on Daily Devotion, in which that Duty is recommended and assisted." In the lines "To S. M., a young African Painter, on seeing his Works," occurs a passage of touching suggestion:

> "But when these shades of time are chas'd away
> And darkness ends in everlasting day,
> On what seraphic pinions shall we move
> And view the landscapes in the realms above!
> There shall thy tongue in heav'nly murmurs flow,
> And there my muse with heav'nly transport glow."

Mrs. Mercy Warren of Massachusetts, a dame of formidable dignity, sarcastic on occasion, a sister of James Otis, and the author of the first history of the American Revolution, wrote verse substantially correct, with here

and there an alert or graceful turn. As much, and no more, may be said for certain New York celebrities, Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, Mrs. Ann Eliza Bleecker and her daughter, as well as various unidentified Ethelindas, Calistas, and Violas, contributors to the *New York Magazine*. The society rhymes and bacchanalian catches of the masculine lyrists are a shade less wearisome, but the popular balladry of the Revolution, rude and often uncouth as it is, possesses a vitality that these more elegant compositions lack. That rollicking piece of doggerel, *Yankee Doodle*, is still a national song, and well-known yet are a few of the ballads commemorating crises or incidents of the War. The battle of Trenton, Burgoyne's defeat, the sea-fight of "Bold Hathorne," the "Battle of the Kegs," the execution of Nathan Hale, all found homely laureates, while the glee of victory fairly bubbles over in *The Dance:*

> "Cornwallis led a country dance,
> The like was never seen, sir,
> Much retrograde and much advance,
> And all with General Green, sir."

Preceding this final scene of the war-drama, the Tories, vociferous at their revels in New York City, had poured musical contempt on the patriots, not sparing even the august commander-in-chief:

> "'Twas then he took his gloomy way
> Astride his dapple donkeys,
> And travelled well, both night and day,
> Until he reached the Yankees.
>
> * * * * *

Full many a child went into camp,
All dressed in homespun kersey,
To see the greatest rebel scamp
That ever cross'd o'er Jersey."

The subject of this saucy lilt was hailed, toward the close of the century, by the versatile Mrs. Rowson, as patron of the American arts,

"a numerous band
Of little beings starting into life,"

and, truly, Washington seems to have done all that one man could. He wrote encouraging letters to the authors who showered him with odes. The note of this Virginian planter to Phillis Wheatley is a model of kindly and respectful courtesy. He sat for his portrait to Stuart, who in this branch of painting surpassed even Copley, the pride of Boston. Over the drama, the art most obnoxious to both Puritans and Quakers, Washington cast a fold of his protecting mantle. The South had little theatrical prejudice to overcome. As early as 1736, *The Virginia Gazette* announced an amateur performance of *The Beaux' Stratagem*. The first play given in America by professional actors on a public stage was *The Merchant of Venice*, presented by an enterprising English *troupe* at Williamsburg in 1752. The first American playhouse was built at Annapolis, in the same year. The following year a theatre was established in New York, the days of performance being Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Six years later a theatre was erected in Philadelphia,

although the drab-coated Quakers, whose indifference to art had driven Matthew Pratt to occasional sign-painting for his bread and butter, and Benjamin West to permanent residence in London, where in time he succeeded Sir Joshua Reynolds as President of the Royal Academy, harassed and hindered the stage until nearly the close of the century. It was not till 1794 that, after memorials and counter-memorials, irruptions of sheriffs and arrests of actors, a theatre was allowed in Boston. Incipient circuses, drolls, and puppet-shows all had a share in clearing the way for the stage in New England. Newport, as usual, had the fewest scruples, although a manager resorted to the ingenious evasion of announcing there a performance of *Othello* as "Moral Dialogues, in Five Parts, Depicting the evil effects of jealousy and other bad passions and Proving that happiness can only spring from the pursuit of Virtue."

American theatres once secured, the advent of an American drama was expected as a matter of course. It is not yet in sight. Not patriotism alone, as America has slowly learned, can call into being *Iliads* and *Antigones*. To outwit Howe and Cornwallis did not prove synonymous with outwitting Shakespeare and Milton. The first play of known American authorship, *The Prince of Parthia*, a ranting tragedy by Thomas Godfrey of Philadelphia, was acted in 1767. Our first American comedy, *The Contrast*, by Royal Tyler, played in New York twenty years later, heralded itself with a flourish of Revolutionary trumpets:

"Exult each patriot heart! — this night is shown
A piece which we may fairly call our own."

The privilege is not precious. Dull, trivial, and shapeless, the play is noteworthy only as providing a clumsy leader in the long procession of stage-Yankees. Fired by this suggestion, the boards began forthwith to bristle with the Revolutionary officer, the southern planter, the New York fop, the Dutch farmer, and other national types. George Washington, America, and the Goddess of Liberty figured together in a pantomime, with feathered Indians and chorusing sailors for a relish. Plays were written on *Bunker Hill, Independence of America, West Point Preserved,* — all valueless.

The review of our early poetry would be disheartening indeed, were it not for the name of PHILIP FRENEAU. Of Huguenot descent, of New York birth, and Princeton education, he entered into manhood when the Revolutionary tide was at full height. He was a good hater, and soon became known as a journalistic writer of violent satires in verse against "the ruffian Gage," the "arch-butcher" Cornwallis, "Old Bute and North, twin sons of hell," and George, the "Nero of our times." He detested the Tories, especially the Tory editors, even more than the Britons. The Puritans of New England, too, except for their sea-faring tastes, were little to his liking.

"These exiles were form'd in a whimsical mould,
And were aw'd by their priests, like the Hebrews of old;

Disclaim'd all pretences to jesting and laughter,
And sigh'd their lives through, to be happy hereafter.
On a crown immaterial their hearts were intent,
They look'd towards *Zion*, wherever they went,
Did all things in hopes of a future reward,
And worry'd mankind — for the sake of the Lord."

When Freneau was not editing a paper or scribbling his lampoons, he was at sea. In 1780, the vessel in which he sailed was captured by an English frigate, and he tasted the grim hospitalities of a British prison ship, an adventure described by him in three wrathful cantos. His praises of the patriots, especially Paul Jones and Washington, were at first unstinted, but assuming in 1791 the editorship of the *National Gazette*, the special organ of the Jeffersonian party, he attacked Washington's administration so sharply that the serenest of Presidents was moved to call him "rascal."

Captain Freneau's political verse, whether satiric or eulogistic, has vigor and a certain rough originality, but no charm. It is the rare lyric, the sudden grace of phrase or image that the long-baffled seeker for American poetry hails as birdnotes in March. Here and there, the French blood tells. When this noisy sailor softens his tones to sing how

"At Eutaw Springs the valiant died,"

Keltic pathos makes itself felt even through the formalism of the diction. There are touches of "natural magic" in his stanzas to *The Wild Honeysuckle* and *Honey Bee*, and the Keltic turn for style, no less than

the new poetic vision of "the ancients of these lands," imparts a lasting attraction to his revery upon *The Indian Burying Ground.*

> "By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews,
> In habit for the chase arrayed,
> The hunter still the deer pursues,
> The hunter and the deer — a shade!"

Campbell paid Freneau the silent compliment of appropriating this last line for a poem of his own, just as Scott made free in *Marmion* with a line from *Eutaw Springs*, — petty pilferings in comparison with the thefts committed upon English bards by our Revolutionary versifiers. It is no slight proof of Freneau's elevation above his rhyming contemporaries that, in relation to English poetry, he gave instead of taking.

VI. **Experiments in Novel Writing.** — It is not easy to regard our early American romances seriously, yet like our Revolutionary oratory, law-studies, and verse-forms, they reflected contemporary England. The novel of domestic life, told by letters and conveying to girlhood the warning that "men betray," was feebly reproduced in America by several women of literary proclivities. A refreshing tartness pervades Mrs. Tabitha Tenney's *Female Quixotism exhibited in the Romantic Opinions and Extravagant Adventures of Dorcasina Sheldon.* Mrs. Hannah Webster Foster, whose husband was a minister at Brighton, Massachusetts, made in 1797 a sentimental sensation with *The Coquette, or the History*

*of Eliza Wharton: A Novel founded on Fact.* The stir caused by the story, which ran through many editions, was largely due to the identity of the villain with Pierrepont Edwards, a son of the revered divine. The opening scenes, laid in New Haven, furnish interesting glimpses of Revolutionary manners. The style is fairly illustrated by the following passage: "He spoke with emphasis. The tear of sensibility sparkled in his eye. I involuntarily gave him my hand, which he pressed with ardor to his lips. Then rising, he walked to the window to conceal his emotion. I rang the bell and ordered tea, during, and after which we shared that social converse which is the true zest of life and which, I am persuaded, none but virtuous minds can participate. General Richman and lady returned with the shades of the evening."

A varied career was that of Mrs. Susannah Haswell Rowson. Her father, a British revenue officer, resident at Nantucket, was sent out of America as a Tory. The daughter, on whom pressed heavy burdens, not lessened by an unfortunate marriage, took to writing novels after the manner of Richardson and sketches after the manner of Sterne. Returning to the United States in 1793, she went upon the stage, playing in Philadelphia and Boston and penning opera, farce, epilogues, what-not, at demand. After four years of theatrical career, she entered, in the words of an early biographer, "upon one of the most delicate and responsible, we might add one of the most exalted and worthy

undertakings, to which a female can aspire, that of educating the young of her own sex." Henceforth she took to writing text-books, — a dictionary, geography, "Historical Exercises," and "Biblical Dialogues," together with odes "On the Birth of Genius," "To Sensibility," and eulogies on Washington and John Adams, — ambitious, uninspired verses with the eighteenth century ear-mark. Preceptress of the Ladies' Academy at Newton, Massachusetts, her instructions were apparently of a tenor that her literary predecessor, Mistress Bradstreet, would have sanctioned.

> "Know you not that woman's proper sphere
> Is the domestic walk? To interfere
> With politics, divinity, or law,
> As much deserved ridicule would draw
> On woman, as the learned, grave divine,
> Cooking the soup on which he means to dine,
> Or formal judge, the winders at his knee,
> Preparing silk to work embroidery."

Of Mrs. Rowson's novels, *Charlotte Temple*, bedewed by "the tears of many thousand readers," is best remembered and still appears, at intervals, in new editions. This story of a young life cruelly wrecked is not without a moving quality for minds that can divest themselves of the sense of humor.

Royal Tyler's tale of piracy, the *Algerine Captive*, smacks of Smollett, but the English influence that told most strongly upon Revolutionary fiction was that of the nightmare school. Aiming at wild, romantic effects, Mrs. Radcliffe, Walpole, Beckford, and others were,

just before the day of Scott and Miss Austen, scaring their readers with tales of ghastly horror. This phase of the novel was expressed in America, with startling though fitful power, by CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN, our first professional man of letters.

A Quaker by birth and ancestry and certain subtle currents of thought and feeling, upon Brown's youth had passed the sceptical influences that flowed from France. Thomas Paine, whose ringing words in *Common Sense* and *The Crisis* were instrumental in rousing and maintaining the Revolutionary ardor, baldly expressed in his *Age of Reason* the deism of Voltaire. To the grief of the godly, French unbelief spread fast through the land, mingling strangely, in many young minds, with hereditary religion. So Brown, whose ancestors fled from England in the same ship with William Penn, is ever looking for visions and listening for voices, but forces himself to account for the supernatural, whenever it appears in his romances, by explanations grounded, no matter how absurdly, on natural science. Somnambulism, self-combustion, and ventriloquism are his extreme resorts. Of temporary madness or settled insanity, of dreams and presentiments, he avails himself freely.

His style is unequal, — touched with a lofty melancholy at its best, and at its worst a provincial exaggeration of the sentimentalities and sensational extravagances of *Clarissa Harlowe* and *The Castle of Otranto* combined. His chosen model in romance was Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, after which Brown's *Ormond* is too closely

fashioned. Rarely he achieves a memorable sentence, as this: "Perhaps, if my pilgrimage had been longer, I might, at some future day, have lighted upon hope." His plots suffer from the fact that, marked for early death by consumption as he was, he wrote with feverish haste, his six romances being produced within three years. *Arthur Mervyn* is, of all his books, the most wandering and forgetful in narrative, continually throwing out false clews and leaving behind unsolved mysteries, leading with elaborate pains up to situations which amount to nothing. With something of Poe's sombre imagination, Brown lacked Poe's fine economy of literary structure. The strength of *Arthur Mervyn* is in its episodes, — its vivid pictures of Philadelphia ravaged by the yellow fever, its glimpses of the debtors' prison, anticipating *Little Dorrit.*

As a literary method, Brown affected, in the beginning of his work, the Richardson fashion of compounding a story from the letters of the leading characters; but his own peculiar variety of this monologue system is recital, one autobiography being set within another, like the Chinese basket-puzzle. The whole book is a confidential narration, usually made in unbearable agony by a speaker who hardly expects to live to the end of his disclosure. The characters figuring in the original story are prone to offer circumstantial accounts of their own blood-curdling crimes or heart-crushing misfortunes, introducing into these histories subordinate personages with the same thirst for self-revelation. Brown delights

as fully as Poe in monsters of wickedness and in desperate emotions. "Sullen and atrocious passions" and "features bursting with horror and wonder" meet us every few pages. His heroes are Byronic, possessed of dark fascinations, and subject to paroxysms of remorse. His characteristic heroine is a trifle indistinct. "Perhaps the turban that wreathed her head, the brilliant texture and inimitable folds of her drapery, and nymph-like port, more than the essential attributes of her person, gave splendor to the celestial vision." These curious puppets, with nothing American about them, haunt, as in *Edgar Huntly*, dim Pennsylvanian solitudes, where even the panther and Indian have an unearthly air. Yet Brown can convert, as in *Wieland*, the familiar chamber and closet into a scene of supernatural dismay: —

"My teeth chattered, and a wild confusion took the place of my momentary calm. . . . What horrid apparition was preparing to blast my sight? Still I listened and gazed. Not long, for the shadow moved; a foot, unshapely and huge, was thrust forward; a form advanced from its concealment, and stalked into the room. It was Carwin! While I had breath, I shrieked. While I had power over my muscles, I motioned with my hand that he should vanish. My exertion could not last long: I sank into a fit."

VII. **John Woolman's Journal** affords an exquisite relief from all these crude, half-ludicrous attempts at literature. The purity of the gentle Quaker's soul has, as

Whittier, his loving editor, says, entered into his language. The words are a transparent medium of spirit. Style and man are equally unconscious of themselves. Without art Woolman has attained, in his best passages, that beauty of simplicity, that absolute candor which is the goal of most studious art. As lucid as Franklin's *Autobiography*, the *Journal* shines with a pearly lustre all its own. Charles Lamb cherished the book. "Get the writings of John Woolman by heart," he urged, "and love the early Quakers."

America has cause to love them. The Friends were rightly named. Their spirit was simpler, sweeter, truer to the divine prompting than the spirit of the Virginia manor-house or the Boston pulpit. Penn's "holy experiment" was a blessing to the land. In the peaceful forest-city of Philadelphia ripened our purest American democracy,

> "For soul touched soul; the spiritual treasure-trove
> Made all men equal; none could rise above
> Nor sink below that level of God's love."

Woolman's statement of his religious creed and experience is given with his wonted simplicity. He had "learned of God" that "all the cravings of sense must be governed by a Divine principle. In times of sorrow and abasement these instructions were sealed upon me, and I felt the power of Christ prevail over selfish desires." This poor New Jersey tailor, unlearned save in the Scriptures, had a heart overflowing with love. He was a Francis of Assisi in his tenderness for the brute

creation. In him the antislavery feeling of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Friends was at its height, and his earnest, pleading remonstrances, as he journeyed on this mission through Virginia and Carolina, had much to do with winning over the members of the Society in the South. From Christian principle and by Christian methods, the Quakers of America abandoned slaveholding more than a half-century before the Emancipation Proclamation was put forth.

As a system, Quakerism has defects. The arts, for instance, are alien to it. "Their rainbow lights are lost in its soft drab shadow." Its practice was not perfect. Like Puritanism in New England and Presbyterianism in Scotland, a development of worldly shrewdness ran parallel with spirituality. No less than the Yankees, the Quakers had a name for hard bargains. One Ebenezer Cook, perhaps no trusty reporter, tells how in Maryland, early in the eighteenth century, he met a Quaker,

> "A pious conscientious rogue,
> As e'er wore bonnet or a brogue,
> Who neither swore nor kept his word,
> But cheated in the fear of God;
> And when his debts he would not pay,
> By light within he ran away."

John Woolman was not of that variety. His Inner Light shone for no selfish profit. In his concern for the negroes, he did not forget the Indians, but made difficult and dangerous excursions among them, preaching the Gospel as the Spirit gave him utterance. Mean-

while, the labor question, the crucial problem of to-day, had begun, even so early, to press upon his heart. He came to believe that luxurious living on the part of the few involves excessive toil for the many, and that all men should therefore fare simply that none need be heavy-laden, — a doctrine savoring more of the Sermon on the Mount than of modern economic theory. When the inward prompting bade him cross the Atlantic, he would not take passage in the ship-cabin, adorned as it was with "sundry sorts of carved work and imagery," a part of that forced tribute of poverty to wealth, but chose to lodge among the sailors, for whose spiritual welfare he soon came to feel "tender desires." Once in the Old World, the rushing, grinding, cruel life of industrial England, black with her mines, and noisy with her factories, smote him with distress. Hearing that it was not uncommon for horses in the stage-coaches to be driven to death, and that postboys had been frozen in their seats on wintry nights, he went his ways on foot, nor had he "freedom to send letters by these posts in the present way of their riding." Wearied out by the physical exertion of his long travel, and, still more, by his daily anguish of pity, he sickened at York and died.

Among the best-known Puritan diaries is one by the Indian missionary, David Brainerd, — a morbid record of spiritual doubts and fears, faint hopes and strong despairs, the writer sometimes envying "birds and beasts their happiness, because they were not exposed to eternal misery." Dr. Franklin, on the other hand,

had found this world so agreeable that he would "have no objection to a repetition of the same life from its beginning, only asking the advantages authors have in a second edition to correct some faults of the first." But Woolman wrote his *Journal* neither in self-accusing consciousness nor self-complacent retrospect. "I have often felt a motion of love to leave some hints in writing of my experience of the goodness of God."

# CHAPTER III

## NATIONAL ERA: GENERAL ASPECTS

Centre of equal daughters, equal sons,
All, all alike endear'd, grown, ungrown, young or old,
Strong, ample, fair, enduring, capable, rich,
Perennial with the Earth, with Freedom, Law and Love,
A grand, sane, towering, seated Mother,
Chair'd in the adamant of Time.

— WALT WHITMAN, *America*.

I. **From Washington to Jackson.** — The first six Presidents of the United States were men of social standing and, Jefferson excepted, of aristocratic sympathies. Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams, represented the best birth and breeding of Virginia and Massachusetts. Washington's conservative temper, especially as manifested in his proclamation of neutrality, when in 1793 France, declaring war against England, looked to America for aid, brought upon him a storm of popular abuse. John Adams was accused of monarchical tendencies. Jefferson, though in theory a radical democrat, exerted in the presidential office a more arbitrary authority than Washington himself. His Embargo Act, holding American vessels in port, with intent to protect them from seizure by the warring navies of England and Napoleon, exasper-

ated New England almost to the point of secession. Bryant, at the ripe age of thirteen, voiced the wrath of the Federalist merchants, who saw their ships rotting at the silent wharves: —

> "And thou the scorn of every patriot's name,
> Thy country's ruin and thy council's shame!
> * * * * * * * *
> Go, wretch, resign the Presidential chair."

The Embargo Act served only to postpone the inevitable and decisive trial of strength with Great Britain, whose aggressions were incessant. "Not content with seizing upon all our property which falls within her rapacious grasp," cried the fiery young Kentuckian, Henry Clay, before Congress, "the personal rights of our countrymen — rights which must forever be sacred — are trampled on and violated through the impressment of our seamen. . . . What are we to gain by war? has been emphatically asked. In reply . . . what are we not to lose by peace? Commerce, character, a nation's best treasure, honor."

Under Madison, America fought her "Second War of Independence," the War of 1812. After this, England kept hands off and respected the Stars and Stripes even upon the high seas, accepting the situation as afterwards humorously voiced in the *Biglow Papers:*

> "We own the Ocean, tu, John:
> You mus'n' take it hard,
> Ef we can't think with you, John,
> It's jest your own back-yard."

The Monroe Doctrine, the assertion that the American continents were no longer open to colonization from Europe, was a logical consequence of this success. A new, glad sense of nationality prevailed. It was the "Era of Good Feeling." The population had increased to over twelve millions, about one-sixth being negro slaves. The area, vastly widened by the purchase of Louisiana from France and of Florida from Spain, covered some two million square miles. To the original thirteen states had been added eleven more, — Vermont, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, Mississippi, Illinois, Alabama, Maine, Missouri. The robust young country, ever pushing westward, had grown impatient of dictation from the Atlantic coast. John Quincy Adams closed the line of cultured Presidents. Boston and its environs no longer represented the expanding life of the American people. "So soon," says Woodrow Wilson, "as the Adams fashion of man became more narrow, intense, aciduous, intractable, according to the tendencies of its nature, in the person of John Quincy Adams, it lost the sympathy, lost even the tolerance of the country, and the national choice took its reckless leap from a Puritan President to Andrew Jackson, a man cast in the rough original pattern of American life at the heart of the continent."

Meanwhile the United States had secured not political freedom alone, but industrial independence of Great Britain. The cotton-spinning machinery, invented and applied in England during the latter half of the eighteenth

century, had been jealously guarded, especially from the revolted colonies, but little by little the precious secrets oozed out. Samuel Slater, with a view to bettering his fortunes, came over from an English factory with spindles buzzing in his brain. British law forbade the exporting of machines or models, but it did not occur to the British officials to search a man's memory for smuggled goods. Building the machinery largely with his own hands, this valuable immigrant had by 1790 a cotton-mill on the Arkwright system in operation at Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Others promptly followed, in South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere, but chiefly along the many watercourses of New England. Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton-gin, in 1793, gave a strong impetus not only to cotton-growing, with slave labor, in the South, but to the textile industry in the North. The Embargo Act had forced the energy and capital of New England out of commerce into manufacture. Protective tariffs were soon demanded and accorded. By 1831, the third year of Jackson's administration, there were no less than eight hundred cotton factories in the country.

Steam had but begun to play its mighty part in our material progress. Travel, almost to the close of this period, continued slow, painful, and hazardous. At the opening of the century, rivers were crossed by perilous fords, or in uncertain ferry-boats, or, at the best, on floating bridges roughly constructed of logs and planks. In Brown's *Clara Howard* we read: "The wind and rain, how will you endure them in your crazy vehicle, thump-

ing over rocks and sinking into hollows? . . . And this river, — to cross it at any time is full of danger, — what must it be at night, and in a storm? . . . Well know I the dangers and toils of a midnight journey, in a stage-coach, in America. The roads are knee-deep in mire, winding through crags and pits, while the wheels groan and totter, and the curtains and roof admit the wet at a thousand seams."

In 1807, Robert Fulton launched on the Hudson the first steamboat that proved of practical service. In a few years our river-ways were all alive with puffing little craft, often run, notoriously on the Mississippi, with extreme recklessness. It was not until 1819 that the Atlantic was first crossed by a steamship, the *Savannah*, sailing from New York under a Connecticut captain. In 1830, the Baltimore and Ohio railroad had fifteen miles open for passenger transport. The cars were drawn, at first by horses, but within twelve months a locomotive, built in Pennsylvania, was put upon the track.

II. **Artistic Promise** was at last distinguishable. The hunger for beauty, for mirth, for that "whiter bread than is made from wheat," had begun to manifest itself even in crudest surroundings. Snowbound families played checkers with red and yellow grains of corn on pine tables chalked into squares. Dancing-schools were opened in the cities, while singing-schools made centres of æsthetic culture, as well as of social excitement, for the rural districts. Musical taste was gaining ground. The pitch-pipe, the bass-viol, and

finally the organ had won their slow way into the churches, where they coöperated with the choirs, long a scandal to country congregations, in hushing the echoes of the discordant Puritan psalmody. At the opening of the century the "fuguing-pieces" of Billings, the Yankee tanner, and his self-educated school were already falling off in popular favor. These riotous, racing tunes, ludicrously unfit for devotional purposes, had at least broken the musical monotony and roused the impulse to criticism and composition. They were certainly stirring. "Now here — now there, now here again," exclaims the enthusiastic Billings. "O, ecstatic! Rush on, you sons of harmony!" Our pioneer composers had written not sacred pieces only, but when the Revolutionary spirit was abroad, a number of lively marches. Such special battle-strains were hardly needed, for the devout old Continentals dashed upon the Redcoats most irresistibly to the inspiration of fifes that shrilled one of their favorite psalm-tunes:

"Let tyrants shake their iron rod,
And slavery clank her galling chains,
We'll fear them not, we'll trust in God;
New England's God forever reigns."

The reaction against the fugue finally led, patriotism notwithstanding, to the study of English music, which opened the way to appreciation of the German masters. Dartmouth College established a Handel Society. Boston followed with the famous Handel and Haydn. Concerts

and oratorios became, in the East, a feature of city life. Pianos appeared in a few wealthy homes.

From England, even while abuse and bullets were in the air, came a continual flow of influences making for the higher civilization. Coleridge, acquainting Boston with German thought, had no small share in promoting the liberal theology led by Channing. Shakespeare, whose works were edited with excellent scholarship and insight by Verplanck of the Knickerbocker group, was expounded by Richard Henry Dana, the forgotten Boston poet, in a course of popular lectures. The development of English poetry from Chaucer to the Lake School formed the subject of a series of articles which Dana published in his solemn quarterly, founded in 1815, the *North American Review*. Wordsworth anointed the eyes of Bryant, Scott fired the invention of Cooper, and at last America had a poet and a novelist beyond dispute. Sydney Smith's question, "Who reads an American book?" which hit us harder than a cannonball, was answered by Irving, writing in the style of Addison, with the spirit of Goldsmith, books well worth the reading.

Our painters, studying in London as well as in Rome and Florence, reflected in art, like Bryant and Percival in poetry, the new enthusiasm for nature. In the Colonial period, when the output of the press was almost exclusively theological and the main concern of life was the soul's salvation, faces were more significant than aught beside. And just as the Colonial artists painted

portraits, even so inevitably did the Revolutionary painters spend their colors on battle-scenes. Colonel Trumbull's *Bunker Hill* and *Surrender of Cornwallis* are examples of the new pictures that sprang from the new subjects. Naturally, too, the school of American painting that appeared early in the nineteenth century was a landscape school. Quickened by the fresh joy of nationality and touched by the romantic spirit of the time, men looked with a changed regard upon American nature. Tangled forests and foaming waters that had meant superstitious dread to the forefathers, peril and hardship to the pioneers, suddenly revealed a wealth of beauty to the delighted gaze of the artist. The "Hudson River School," dominated by Cole, whom Turner pronounced "as much of a poet as a painter," was most at home among the Catskills, over which Irving had thrown a bewitchment of Dutch legend. But Allston, an idealist whose brush inclined not to landscapes alone, but to literary and Scriptural subjects, set up his easel in Boston, where, with his art lectures, his occasional excursions into the neighboring field of letters, and his European standards of taste, he furthered, with Channing and Dana, the cause of general culture.

For the first three decades of the century, however, New York took the lead in literature as in painting and drama. An active force in promoting all three was William Dunlap, a useful though careless chronicler of our theatre and arts of design, biographer of Brockden Brown, and, moreover, a dramatic author and an

artist of whom it was curtly said: "There are two things Dunlap can't do — he can't write and he can't paint." Over threescore plays, original, adapted, or translated, attest his devotion to the stage. John Howard Payne, too, wrote voluminously for oblivion. Our first famous actor, Edwin Forrest, who made the reputation of Payne's *Brutus*, is responsible for the flood of Indian melodramas that set in about 1830. There had been occasional attempts to introduce Pocahontas, King Philip, and other picturesque natives behind the footlights, these stage Indians belonging, as Mark Twain said of Cooper's tawny braves, to "an extinct tribe which never existed," but Forrest's success in the title-rôle of Stone's prize drama, *Metamora*, brought out warwhoop, feathers, and tomahawk in all their glory. Through the first half of the century, too, Revolutionary plays continued in favor. *Andre*, *Eutaw Springs*, *Lexington*, *Siege of Boston*, *Siege of Yorktown*, *Marion*, *Washington at Valley Forge*, appealed, however weakly, to the sense once thrilled in London playhouses by the historical dramas of Shakespeare and his fellows.

The literature of the time was characterized by freshness and exuberance of feeling. After the long winter of Puritanism, with its repressions and denials, a springtide of sentiment had to follow. Not yet deepened to the passion that tore the very heart of the nation in the Civil War, not yet saddened to the guarded, questioning temper of to-day, this early enthusiasm was

amusingly naive. A contemporary historian of literature betrays himself to the smile of posterity by his pride in the popular annuals — "periodicals of great taste and beauty of execution, under the name of *Souvenirs*, *Tokens*, *Forgetmenots*, *Talismans*, etc. It is delightful to look over these fashionable publications and find so much fine writing in them. A gem of prose is followed by a floweret of poesy." A modern critic, Greenough White, who has faithfully turned the pages of these faded gift-books, reports them as "made up of reveries upon *Moonlight*, *Wild Flowers*, *Tears*, *The Twilight Hour*, *Memory*, *The Fall of the Leaf*, sonnets *To Hannah More*, or *On the Death of a Child* or *To a Beloved Parent on her Recovery from a Dangerous Illness*, or *On Burning a Packet of Letters;* and tales of wonder or terror, *The Mysterious Wedding*, *The Bandit of the Alps*, *The Strange Mariner*. Children, too, must have their little annual: *The Rosette*, containing *The Neglected Bird*, *A Dirge for a Young Girl*, *The Fading Leaf*, *The Swan's Melody;* or good Mrs. Sigourney's *Olive Leaves*, with its *Childhood's Piety* and *The Dying Sunday School Boy*." Mrs. Sigourney, rejoicing in the title of "The American Mrs. Hemans," was a prime favorite. Those precocious girls, the Davidson sisters, who died when scarcely out of childhood, leaving volumes of fluent and monotonous verse, long haunted, as pathetic wraiths, the little American Parnassus. What Irving was pleased to designate as "the classic pen of Miss Sedgwick" vied in favor with Cooper's stronger

quill. Her *Redwood*, remembered for Debby Lennox, its Yankee spinster, was reprinted in England and translated into French. Her *Hope Leslie*, a story of the early Colonial days, ran through edition after edition, and *The Linwoods*, depicting Revolutionary times, accomplished the feat of wringing copious tears from her publisher, one of the Harper brothers, as he read the proof-sheets. Mrs. Maria Gowen Brooks, dubbed by Southey "Maria del Occidente," was not a sentimentalist of the common order, but an American echo of the new English romanticism. The heroine of *Zophiel*, her principal poem, is a meek maiden with shoulders of "milky swell," "ivory hands," "silvery feet," and all other oriental charms. She is loved by a fallen spirit, a jealous demon that mysteriously slays every would-be bridegroom who approaches her, until the destined husband puts him forever to flight by a potent talisman, the gift of the benevolent angel, Raphael.

Women had no monopoly of milk-and-water literature. Richard Henry Wilde's *My Life is like the Summer Rose*, Samuel Woodworth's *The Old Oaken Bucket*, George P. Morris's *O Woodman, spare that Tree* are songs that were taken at once to the popular heart, together with Francis Scott Key's *Star-spangled Banner*, which the popular voice has never quite learned to sing. Nathaniel P. Willis, with his smooth and shallow versifications of Scripture, his animated, amiable letters, held a large and edified audience. Willis was one of that group jauntily known as the Knickerbocker School,

— a band of young New Yorkers attempting, with the exception of Bryant, nothing very earnest nor very wise, but working on human materials in the artistic spirit for the artistic end of pure delight. The stormy Cooper was with them, but hardly of them. Irving, their illustrious leader, Paulding, the friend of Irving's youth, and that other pair of young and loving comrades, the poets Halleck and Drake, are, with Willis, the natural representatives of the Knickerbocker temper in our literature, — a temper light, sweet, and spontaneous, making up in grace and gayety what it lacks in seriousness and strength.

III. **From Jackson to Lincoln.**— The election of Jackson inaugurated a new era in American politics. With him the people came to power. Jefferson's theoretical democracy was a very different matter from the practical democracy now introduced. One by one, the Hamiltonian checks on the popular will gave way. The "plain people" were felt, as never before, in the conduct of the government. The good was mingled with evil. The Spoils System, with its debasing and corrupting influences, dates from Jackson. "Swarms of office-hunting locusts," in Greeley's phrase, settled thick about the White House. It was a tempestuous administration, but tough "Old Hickory" carried his points, good and bad, showing himself as stubborn in maintaining the Union as in putting down the National Bank. His views lacked idealism, his methods lacked dignity, but something fresh and sound and vigorous in the pith of the man

Your affectionate friend
Washington Irving

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delighted the people. In this roughly reared soldier of Tennessee, the pioneering, work-a-day millions found themselves represented as they had never been represented before. His successor, Van Buren, also a Democrat, upon whose administration broke the financial panic invoked by Jackson's recklessness, was a New York politician, but the popular choice speedily inclined again to a popular leader. "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" was the rallying-cry of a memorable Whig campaign, which took the form of a glorification of that rude life of the Northwest from which General Harrison had come. Log-cabins on wheels were drawn in the shouting processions, coonskins were waved for banners, the drinking of hard cider became a political virtue. Harrison's victory was overwhelming, and his untimely death caused grief and disappointment the country through. The Vice-President, on whom the national burden fell, was a Virginian slave-owner, soon at loggerheads with Harrison's cabinet and with the northern Whigs. The party was so broken up by Tyler's term that the Democrats returned to power in 1845 with Polk of Tennessee. During his administration occurred our Mexican War, scored by Grant as "one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation." General Taylor's good fighting in this bad cause won him the Presidency. Although elected by the Whigs, this Louisiana sugar-planter was called "massa" by a hundred negroes. Vice-President Fillmore, who completed Taylor's term, had been born in a log-cabin on the New York frontier

and had made his own irregular way to the Buffalo bar, but the two Presidents succeeding, Pierce of New Hampshire and Buchanan of Pennsylvania, both Democrats, could boast the national patent of nobility inherent in the term "college graduate." All these Presidents since Jackson were primarily politicians, nominees of "the machine" and governing in the interest of party; but in Abraham Lincoln, son and grandson of pioneers, bred in the backwoods, great by his "clear-grained human worth," the new America found, at last, a true exponent.

"Nature, they say, doth dote,
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan,
Repeating us by rote:
For him her Old-World moulds aside she threw,
And, choosing sweet clay from the breast
Of the unexhausted West,
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new."

This westward expansion of the people, this subduing and possessing the vast stretch of savage continent, appeals to the imagination like a triumphal national march. The colonists clung to the eastern seaboard, but with the achievement of independence began the tramp of the pioneers. In 1785, Freneau had written:

"To western woods, and lonely plains,
Palemon from the crowd departs,
Where nature's wildest genius reigns,
To tame the soil, and plant the arts —
What wonders there shall freedom show,
What mighty States successive grow!"

This irruption into the wilderness was itself an epic poem. Many a hunter and trapper, many a fur-trader and wood-chopper felt, like Daniel Boone, the fascination of the solitude. The western immigrant, says Will Carleton, "went to see the world as the Omnipotent made it and the deluge left it! He went to hear the tramp of the wild congregations — the horse and the buffalo — shaking the prairie plains." The war-worn Continentals, their blue and buff faded, their arrears unpaid, led the way to "the poor man's country," and, for three brave generations, incessant trains of pack-horses, ox-carts, and canvas-covered emigrant wagons, the "prairie schooners" of that perilous voyage, toiled after, blazing their trail by wrecks and skeletons. Through the Cumberland Gap to Kentucky's "Dark and Bloody Ground," from the Alleghanies to the "Father of Waters," beyond his fertile basin to the mysterious plains, forward at last, in a fevered rush, across the grand bar of the Rockies to the gold-fields of California, decade after decade the motley multitude surged on. The music of that strange advance was the perpetual ring of the settler's axe, crack of the hunter's rifle, and all too frequent cry of mortal agony, as the maddened Indian tribes, driven back and back, scalped, burned, and tortured all along the frontier. But the steady wave of palefaces, men reared in hardihood, wise in all manner of woodcraft, wary as the redskins themselves, with muscles and wills of iron, could neither be turned nor stayed. Women hoed the corn beside their husbands. Children bore their part in thousands

of humble tragedies. The grandfather of Lincoln was shot close by his Kentucky cabin, and only the prompt bullet of an elder son, standing in the doorway, saved Lincoln's father, then a boy of six, from the tomahawk already swung above his head. But camps grew into clearings. Fields of wheat waved among the hewed or blackened stumps of ancient forests. In lieu of those first alert figures, picturesque in coonskin cap, fringed deerskin shirt, leggins and moccasins, the powder-horn over the shoulder and the long knife in the belt, the scene was filled by sturdy shapes of homespun-suited farmers. The big game disappeared with the hunter. The bewildered Indians were penned within government Reservations. Rough-riding cowboys rounded up patriarchal herds of cattle. The little log school-house and Presbyterian meeting-house, which had almost kept pace with the blockhouse, stood now upon its ruins. Backwoods settlements, where the neighbors had made merry with fiddle and dance at a corn-shucking, a house-raising, or a sugaring off, sprang into populous towns. The winning of the West was accomplished, not without full price of sweat and blood.

These were bustling times and, after a fashion, highly prosperous. Our material progress was swift as a dream. While the Indians, peering through the foliage on the edge of the Great Lakes, believed the trail of fiery cloud from the white man's big canoe the breath of an imprisoned spirit, a web of railroads had made ready a fresh arena for still greater triumphs of steam. The iron re-

sources of the country were now worked in earnest. Canals and bridges witnessed to feats of engineering. The vast Appalachian coal-field was efficiently opened to mining enterprise, oil-wells were bored, copper deposits unearthed, and the precious metals of the Cordilleras sought in a delirium of greed. Morse's telegraph marvellously facilitated business of all sorts. Inventions and discoveries were numerous, especially those tending to the common well-being. The sewing-machine, the mower, and the reaper lightened the tasks of household and of farm; ether was a miracle of mercy to the hospitals.

Europe sent us her poverty. An ever-thickening host of Scandinavians streamed into the Northwest, taking up the public lands. A sturdy, thrifty, Protestant stock, good farmers and good citizens, they made their welcome. Political revolutions and industrial distress at home secured us equally valuable immigrants from Germany, England, and other Teutonic countries. For Celts we had the Irish peasantry, fleeing in hundreds of thousands from the Great Famine, and, penniless and exhausted, remaining where they were landed, in the Atlantic states. The cry of gold startled the sleep of Asia, and hordes of Chinese choked the Pacific ports. But although these last comers were ungraciously accepted, still there was work for all strong hands, and it was the American pride that no able-bodied, temperate man need go hungry here.

The all-absorbing race problem of the period had to

do with the negroes. As the new states came in, the balance of free states and slave states was jealously preserved. By a gradual plan of emancipation, in which Vermont led off as early as 1777, New England and the Middle States were practically clear of the evil thing by Jackson's day. The Ordinance of 1787 had excluded slavery from the Old Northwest, carved in time into the five great states north of the Ohio, but another five, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, had been admitted as slave states before 1820, when, amid heated and threatening discussion, the Missouri Compromise was framed by Henry Clay. This Compromise admitted Missouri as a slave state, Maine coming in simultaneously as a free state, but it also established in the national domain a dividing line above which slavery should not go. Henceforth the North, where the Abolition agitation became vehement, and the South, angered by what it considered attacks upon its constitutional rights, stood as hostile sections, their intensifying antagonism menacing the Union. But the Missouri Compromise had postponed the crisis, and for a generation more the balance of political power was maintained. In 1836, Arkansas was admitted as a slave state, matched, the following year, by Michigan as a free state. Florida and Texas entered as slave states in 1845, offset the year after by Iowa and Wisconsin as free states. The application of California, in 1849, precipitated in the Senate a battle of the Titans. Again Henry Clay, an old man now, three times an unsuccessful candidate for the Presi-

dency, offered compromises. Webster, who, like the great southern Whig, was bent on preserving the Union at all costs, gave his powerful support. Calhoun of South Carolina, lifelong champion of State Rights, came to the Senate, a dying man, to speak upon this bill. It passed, and California came in, according to her own desire, as a free state. Kansas, where the experiment was tried of settling the question by "squatter sovereignty," stormily rejected slavery, and Minnesota and Oregon successively joined the rank of free states. The balance of power was now effectually overthrown. In the course of the Kansas agitation, an antislavery political party was formed, known as Republicans, and on the election of Lincoln, the Republican candidate, South Carolina seceded from the Union. The Gulf States promptly followed, and these seven had organized themselves into a Confederacy before Lincoln's inauguration in March of 1861. Three border states, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas, went out when Lincoln called for troops. Even Virginia, although the western part of the Old Dominion broke away as independent, joined the seceders. The storm-cloud had burst at last.

IV. **Artistic Progress.** — Although in this mid-century period the high-water mark of American literature was reached, the word has been far from proportionate to the deed. The poetry of action has tended to silence speech. What pen could keep pace with that westward onset, with rush of train and flash of telegraph, with our whirl of civil strife? The War, for instance, has not

found its Shakespeare nor its Tolstoi. The records it has left in literature are as yet but fragmentary. It threw out a spray of battle-songs, — *My Maryland; Marching Along; Battle-Hymn of the Republic; Dixie; Wanted — A Man; Tramp, Tramp, Tramp; Three Hundred Thousand More; Marching through Georgia; The Conquered Banner; The Battle-Cry of Freedom; Somebody's Darling; Driving Home the Cows; Ready; How Are You, Sanitary; Roll-Call; The Blue and the Gray.* Whittier, Quaker though he was, Longfellow, Aldrich, even Bryant, paid their passing tribute of verse. Holmes pleaded with the proud Palmetto State on her secession:

> "O Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,
> There are battles with fate that can never be won!
> The star-flowering banner must never be furled,
> For its blossoms of light are the hope of the world."

Bret Harte sounded *The Réveille.* Stedman poured praise on old John Brown and on gallant Kearney, whose dirge was tenderly voiced by Boker. This poet, too, honored *The Black Regiment.* Brownell celebrated naval fights on river and bay, Read echoed the hoof-beats of *Sheridan's Ride*, and Lathrop commemorated Keenan's sacrificial charge

> "That saved the army at Chancellorsville."

Manassas, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, written clear in blood, were traced again in ink. Winthrop had his elegy, and Lyon. Stonewall Jackson had many. Whit-

man's one popular lyric is his sob for Lincoln, *My Captain*. Lowell's two series of *Biglow Papers* form a unique commentary on the Mexican War and the War of Secession. War stories have abounded, from Miss Alcott's tearful-smiling *Hospital Sketches* to Crane's chromatic *Red Badge of Courage*, but for all these, and more, the utterance is so inadequate that our great national conflict still remains, in its tragic scope, "unchronicled, unsung."

It is obviously vain to look, before the sixties, toward the West for literature. Her brown and stalwart hands were busy with heavier tools than the pen. The Muses might well acquiesce and wait.

"'Tis fit the forest fall,
The steep be graded,
The mountain tunnelled,
The sand shaded,
The orchard planted,
The globe tilled,
The prairie granted,
The steamer built."

The West, throbbing with humanity, was hard at work making the new America. Little time was there for reading books, much less for writing them.

The silence of the South is more puzzling. With a leisure class, many of whose representatives were widely travelled in foreign lands, American gentlemen distinguished for culture of manners, and of a peculiarly lofty and romantic temper, the South might naturally have been expected to take the lead in the national arts. For

her dumb Colonial days, the isolation caused by settling on wide plantations, instead of in communities, has been held accountable. These living conditions, in large degree, persisted till the Civil War. With few cities, the stimulus that comes from mental contact and friction was wanting. "Tobacco and cotton," says Professor Trent, "have choked the minds as well as the acres of our people." The Revolutionary epoch seemed to indicate that the best intellect of the South instinctively addressed itself to questions of the public polity, — an indication confirmed by the senatorial debates for the generation preceding secession. As the law had been the chosen profession, and statesmanship the chief concern of Jefferson, Marshall, Randolph, and Henry, so it was with Clay, Calhoun, and Robert Y. Hayne. But the problem is solved only in part. Why was the literature actually produced so ineffective? Aside from the glancing glory of Poe, the leading names, as Simms and Kennedy and John Esten Cooke, stand for pleasant, old-fashioned, rather dull romances, after (and far after) Walter Scott. If the writing of the men was pale, that of the women, as represented by Mrs. Southworth, Mrs. Hentz, and Miss Evans, was flushed with unreal tints. The lyrists, Wilde, the Pinkneys, Philip Pendleton Cooke, sounded but a faint echo of the old cavalier note. Such literary expression as there was had inevitable grace, but not the convincing force of frankness. In slavery days, the southern writer could not and would not see the life about him as it was. Far less would he or could he

publish what he saw. "The standard of literary work," admits Thomas Nelson Page, "was not a purely literary standard, but one based on public opinion, which, in its turn, was founded on the general consensus that the existing institution was not to be impugned, directly or indirectly, on any ground, or by any means whatsoever."

Southern slavery was, on the other hand, a potent cause of the literary activity in the North. Ten years after the Missouri Compromise, William Lloyd Garrison, a Massachusetts printer of whom Lowell wrote, "Posterity will forget his hard words, and remember his hard work," established the Abolitionist Society. Its organ was Garrison's weekly paper, *The Liberator*, whose motto ran *No Union with Slaveholders*, and whose purpose was to maintain the proposition that slaveholding, apart from all political considerations, was morally a crime, and should, as such, be put down with the strong hand. What seemed, not unnaturally, to Calhoun "the blind and criminal zeal of the Abolitionists," was a characteristic outbreak of the mighty moral passion of New England. A Knickerbocker literature, essentially artistic and entertaining, was not for her. When her great hour of utterance came, it was the old Puritan flood of idealism broken loose again. The liberalization of theology through Channing and Parker, the European influences brought to bear upon American thought and taste by Allston and Dana, Everett and Ticknor, Longfellow and Lowell, resulted in that New England renascence whose supreme achievements were the Transcendental essays

and poems of Emerson, and the mystical romances of Hawthorne. But the core of the movement was ethical, and the most definite object proposed to that eager moral enthusiasm was the blotting out of slavery. To this end Wendell Phillips lectured and Charles Sumner debated, Whittier struck out burning poems, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, in the access of indignation roused by the Fugitive Slave Law, penned the most tremendous of Abolition tracts, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The *Atlantic Monthly Magazine*, which became the dominant directing force of the new literature, was founded with the quiet intention of opposing to slavery the higher sentiment of the North in ways less direct and offensive than those of *The Liberator*.

The intuitional philosophy, from which the Transcendentalism of New England sprang, was but one of the channels by which German currents had begun to water the soil of the New World. Our mid-century painting abjured the English and Italian schools for that of Düsseldorf on the Rhine, whither our young artists flocked. Leutze, known throughout the land by his *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, introduced the Düsseldorf style, though with an added dash of sternness and flavor of sobriety. A new landscape fashion, fathered by Bierstadt, a native of Düsseldorf, who had travelled in the Rockies, came into vogue. Bold and sometimes grandiose paintings of mountain chains, sheer ravines, prairie reaches with a solitary figure of pony-riding Indian or bison-tracking hunter, held sway. The new West had

H B Stowe

captured the artists. Yet Kensett loved best the autumnal shores of quiet lakes, and Gifford, with his rich sense of atmosphere, often turned from Pacific scenery back to the haunted Hudson. Before the sixties, American painting was already chastened in tone. "Gracious studies of light," notes Professor Muther, "and intimate views of forest paths, and distant huts and meadowland, took the place of pompous dramatic efforts, wild mountain landscapes, and glaring fireworks."

Meanwhile American sculpture had come into being. Greenough and Powers, both born in 1805, the one the son of a wealthy Boston merchant, the other a Vermont farmer's boy, led the way to Italy. Before the middle of the century, Powers had won a European fame by his *Greek Slave*. But in general the initial group of American sculptors wrought directly on American subjects, producing busts and statues of the public men of the day, and the heroes of the Revolution. Washington appeared in every guise, seated, on foot, on horseback, and even as an Olympian Zeus. Now and then a perilous instant of pioneer life, as *The Rescue*, was frozen into marble. An ideal figure of Liberty, by Crawford, the leading sculptor of the Middle States, crowned the dome of the national Capitol, upon whose bronze doors the same artist has recorded the War of Independence.

Crawford's colossal statue of Beethoven, executed for Boston Music Hall, testifies to the growing appreciation of music. About the middle of the century political exiles from Italy, coming to New York in considerable

numbers, brought with them a musical enthusiasm which did not rest until Italian opera, with adequate orchestra, was given in that city. The German element in New York, too, was felt musically more and more, especially in the Philharmonic Society. Parisian artists gave regular seasons of French opera in New Orleans. Here the opera was often followed by a ball, a great swinging floor being lowered, on which the blithe Creoles would dance till dawn. Boston, as became her Puritan traditions, especially cultivated the oratorio. It was Boston, too, that first introduced the study of vocal music into the public schools. The many musical societies naturally led to musical conventions and festivals. Prima donnas from over sea, little companies of foreign singers, and even itinerant orchestras made the tour of the American towns. The visit of Jenny Lind extended over two years. Yet original American music of scope and significance was still to seek, though minor contributions to the world's melody were occasionally made. Payne's simple song of *Home, Sweet Home* has outlasted all his operas, in one of which it was set. Efforts were put forth to stimulate native production. In 1855, for instance, Ole Bull, as opera-manager of the Academy of Music, offered a prize of one thousand dollars for the best opera by an American composer on an American subject; but the project came to nothing.

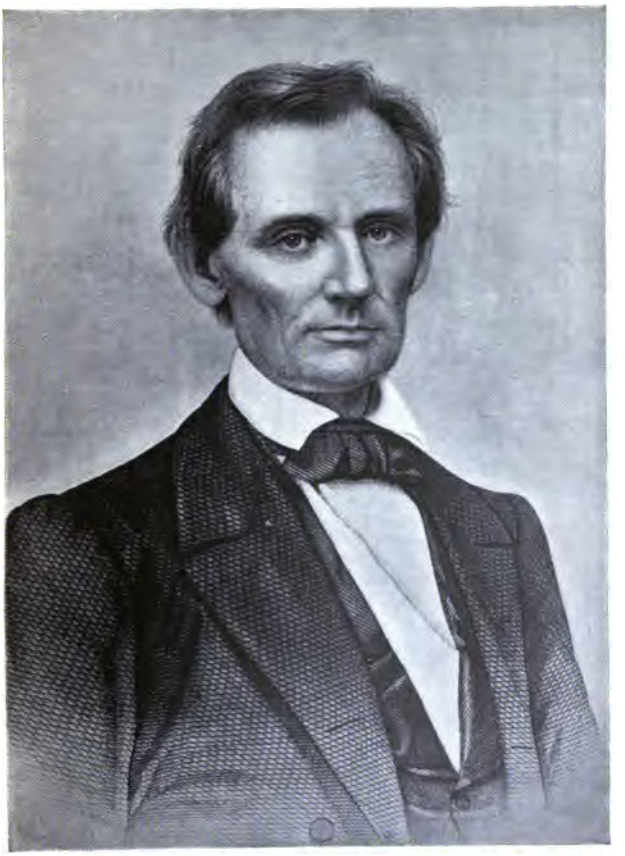
American drama, despite similar attempts on the part of Edwin Forrest to bribe the Muses, still made but a paltry showing. Plays with Indian chiefs for heroes

gradually shuffled into crude spectacles of frontier adventure, the dime novel behind the footlights. The new stage-hero was initiated in 1831 by Paulding with his Colonel Nimrod Wildfire, convincing in buckskin attire and ticklish tilt of the rifle. The Forty-niners in due season swaggered across the stage, and the eastern theatres, in general, kept their audiences in mind of that westward-rolling cloud of our hardiest American manhood.

During the period now under review the art of life came in for literary consideration. American ways then, as since, were variously displeasing to our outspoken guests from abroad. The Pulszkys, coming over with the Kossuths in the middle of the century, found American children pert, our city architecture either monotonous or inharmoniously eclectic, the *New York Herald* unprincipled, our national integrity better than our national monuments, and spiritualism in full career. Mrs. Trollope, who visited us some twenty years earlier, seeing mainly Cincinnati, and Cincinnati in its younger days, complained that there were too many miles of mud at the mouth of the Mississippi, and too much American boasting on its steamboats, that our servants were intolerably democratic, and that the leading men of the West ate with their knives, spat in public places, and sat tipped back in their chairs, "exquisite posture masters," with their heels above their heads. Harriet Martineau judged us kindly, although she, like Mrs. Kemble, was shocked at slavery, but the disgust of Dickens, the beloved Dickens whom we had

welcomed with open arms and open purses, cut us to the quick. What was false and foolish in all this criticism could be forgiven. The rub came with what was just and true. Fortunately for America, she had, in these awkward years of her overgrowth, teachers as well as censors. Channing urged continually the beauty of dignity, of quiet simplicity, of repose. Irving was a potent illustration of "gentleness untired" and "noble feeling warm." Our Cambridge poets, the benignant Longfellow, the genial Lowell, the sparkling Holmes, typical American gentlemen of a refinement unfeigned and unashamed, set a fair example. Thoreau, for all his tart emphasis on individuality, loved a high behavior, and Emerson went up and down the rugged land praising on bare Lyceum platforms "the delicacy of beautiful carriage and customs." Charm of manner, he says succinctly, "gives a higher pleasure than statues or pictures; it is the finest of the fine arts."

V. **From Lincoln to McKinley.** — At the commencement of the Civil War, the country held some thirty-one million people. Of these the seceding states counted less than nine million, more than one-third slaves. The Cotton-State Confederacy had hoped for support from all the slave area, which was greater than the free area, from the newly settled Northwest, from the Democratic party in New England and the Middle States, and finally from France and Great Britain. These hopes failing, not the military genius of Lee nor the desperate gallantry of the southern armies could save the cause of secession,



A. Lincoln

identified as it was with the cause of slavery. Four years of national agony, a public debt of nearly three thousand million dollars, a depreciated currency, the temporary ruin of southern prosperity, and the sacrifice of nearly a million of our best and bravest lives, crowned by the martyrdom of Lincoln, were the first items in the long bill of costs. Others have since come in, as heavy pension charges, the social demoralization due to army life, the rapid growth of monopolies and a consequent breach between rich and poor; but Union and Emancipation could hardly be bought too dear. The national gains, too, were not confined to the triumph of the Federal principle and the abolition of slavery. The New South is already richer, abler, more joyous than the Old. She has developed mechanical industries, opened up her immense coal-fields and iron-beds, more than recovered her productiveness in cotton and become, in manufacture, commerce, and literature, a fresh and vital force. The swiftness with which the wounds of war were healed has strengthened confidence in American government and American character. The revolted states have long been reinstated. The leaders in rebellion have rendered good service in congresses and cabinets.

But the work of reconstruction, deprived of Lincoln's generous wisdom and complicated by bitter quarrels between Lincoln's successor, Vice-President Johnson of Tennessee, and the suspicious Senate, was of the hardest. With the South struggling against carpet-bag rule, and

the North absorbed with the new expansion of business, the national leadership has fallen to the "Old Northwest." The centres of manufacturing and of population are here, although financial control is still with Wall Street. As Lincoln had come from Illinois, so Grant, Hayes, Garfield, and McKinley came from Ohio, and Harrison from Indiana. Cleveland is the exception, although his city, Buffalo, is on the northwest border.

The tendency of this western civilization seems at first sight to set toward materialism. Ohio and Indiana, with their natural gas and petroleum, their iron and coal, Michigan, with her grain and lumber, Wisconsin, with her dairies and breweries, and Illinois, with her strong energies divided among agriculture, manufacture, and commerce, have all made haste to be rich. This utilitarian example has been diligently followed the country over. A population numbering now more than threescore millions, dwelling in a national area of three million and a half square miles, has been hitherto more intent on money-getting and money-spending than on the cultivation of the æsthetic and spiritual life. The material development has been on a gigantic scale. The United States of to-day is nine times as large as the United States of 1800. West Virginia, beautiful for scenery, silver Nevada, the wheat-waving states of Nebraska and the Dakotas, Colorado, rich in precious ores, Montana, Washington, and Idaho, with their mines and cattle-ranges, Wyoming, the experimenter in woman

suffrage, and Utah, cleansed of her Mormon polygamy, have swelled the roll of states to forty-five. The territories of Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma, with the half-organized Alaska, reputed a new El Dorado, wait their turn. The West, so recently an Indian hunting-ground, is dotted by cities, where closely packed steel towers shoot up within a few months higher than the old cathedrals to whose rearing went centuries. The splendid insolence of invention taps Niagara and makes a public drudge of electricity. There is no lack of heroic enterprise. The Dark Continent is invaded, the Arctic ice is dared, but even heroism is exploited by the great newspapers and takes on an advertising flavor.

So prodigious a development is attended with peculiar perils. At the close of the Civil War, Lowell's tribute to the delivered country thrilled every hearer with a nobler national joy:

"Be proud! for she is saved, and all have helped to save her!
She that lifts up the manhood of the poor,
She of the open soul and open door,
With room about her hearth for all mankind!"

But at the present time the overwhelming inrush of foreigners presents so grave a problem that our keen-eyed observer, Kipling, pays the American for his hospitalities but a satiric compliment:

"His easy unswept hearth he lends
From Labrador to Guadeloupe;
Till, elbowed out by sloven friends,
He camps, at suffrance, on the stoop."

To look down upon the steerage decks of the Atlantic liners that pass in unending procession through New York harbor beneath Bartholdi's statue of *Liberty enlightening the World* is to see, through ignorance, squalor, and the Babel of strange tongues, the America of tomorrow. Chicago, in Jackson's day a frontier fort and now second only to New York, is the fifth German city of the globe, the third Swedish, and the second Polish. The hungry hordes from Europe and Asia have contributed, in a sense, to the national wealth. Gangs of unskilled laborers, Irish, Chinese, Italians, Hungarians, have built our railroads, laid our water-pipes and gas-pipes, levelled our highways, opened our mines, and thus made possible the swift material expansion of the last sixty years; but they have created our city slums, helped debase our city politics, and hurled us prematurely upon the labor question.

We have tried to believe that we have no labor question. "In a land," says Mr. Howells, "where journeymen carpenters and plumbers strike for four dollars a day, the sum of hunger and cold is comparatively small, and the wrong from class to class has been almost inappreciable, though all this is changing for the worse." There was no labor agitation of consequence anywhere in the country before the Revolution. During the first quarter of the present century a few trades-unions were formed; but a Frenchman, M. Chevalier, visiting America in 1834, stated, by way of comparison, that while such unions in the Old World threatened war between labor and capital,

"in America, on the contrary, such a coalition means, raise our wages, or we go to the West." The skurry for Oklahoma, in 1889, showed how little desirable land is still open. Instead of a free West for those to whom the East metes out hard measure, there is, from Atlantic to Pacific, the competition with cheap immigrant labor. Capital is in control, monopolies dominate the markets, and we have at last within our borders not merely the army of tramps, the secret session of anarchists, but the honest, able artisan, seemingly without his share in the national heritage of liberty, working hard to find hard work to do, bewildered and embittered by the new industrial dependence that the years have so suddenly brought upon him. Over one-fourth of the mechanics and factory hands of the United States are now organized to fight for comely American existence. Within the last two decades have occurred a succession of ominous strikes. Pittsburg, Homestead, Chicago, are the names of battlefields.

Against these and other dangers stand arrayed the conscience of the country, the alert intelligence, hopeful energy, and earnest patriotism of rich and poor alike. So great and complex a republic, trying for all mankind the mighty experiment of "government of the people, by the people, for the people," must needs make many stumbles by the way; but it has sinewy strength to rise again. If the western farmers suffer, the best brains in the land fall to ferreting out the economic causes of that suffering. Only with Garfield began that Civil Service Reform which

already is practically accomplished. America has long realized that she stands pledged before the elder nations of the earth to demonstrate the power of democracy, with its free schools, free ballot, and free religious thought, to elevate mankind. Ever mindful of her workers, she has bent an unprecedented inventive and industrial activity to increasing the sum of human well-being. She cares greatly for education, national honor, and the deeds of Christian mercy. Her capitalists endow universities and public libraries. Political parties blur their lines when the country's integrity is at stake. Her charities reach around the globe. The Puritan leaven is still at work, and still, though in sterner fashion, the words of Emerson hold true: "America means opportunity."

VI. **Present Artistic Conditions.** — American men of letters are too busy nowadays to achieve the best. The "broad margins" to life that Thoreau loved, few allow themselves. Sucked in ever greater numbers into the vortex of New York, they are spun about, like mere bankers and brokers, in the whirl. Hawthorne mused away his youth, and in the silences there ripened golden fruit. Our literature of to-day is abundant, varied, clever, but if genius is among us, it walks unrecognized. Notwithstanding the high-hearted music of Lanier, the delicate artistry of Aldrich, the fastidious finesse of James, and warmer humanity of Howells, no literary star of the first magnitude has brightened on our firmament since the Civil War.

Yet our educational apparatus is more elaborate than

ever before. The American university belongs to this third period of the century. Johns Hopkins dates from 1876. Columbia and Princeton are almost as new, in their enlarged scope, as Chicago and Leland Stanford. The expansion of intellectual life has at last reached woman. In 1861 Vassar led the way that Smith, Wellesley, Bryn Mawr, Radcliffe, Mount Holyoke, and others have been swift to follow, while the western universities, on Michigan's frank initiative, have thrown their doors wide open to women, and the eastern are beginning to accord them at least an eavesdropping privilege.

The pecuniary returns for writing, uncertain still, were never better. The American daily, disreputable as it is beside the best products of the London press, has become a tremendous engine, rich, adventurous, all-consuming. If its probity and dignity equalled its energy, it could hardly be overpraised; but even with all its imperfections on its head, the newspaper has been for a century our most effective instrument of democratic education. "The Press is the prostituted companion of liberty," said Fisher Ames, the Federalist orator of Massachusetts, "and somehow or other, we know not how, its efficient auxiliary. It follows the substance like its shade; but while a man walks erect, he may observe that his shadow is almost always in the dirt. . . . It would be easy to enlarge on its evils. They are in England, they are here, they are everywhere. It is a precious pest and a necessary mischief, and there would be no liberty without it." It is estimated that in 1790 there was one copy of a newspaper

to every individual in the land; in 1890, sixty copies. Over twenty thousand periodicals, — dailies, weeklies, and magazines, — are to-day printed in the United States, some in enormous editions. The American magazine, now focussed in New York, long had its favorite seat in Philadelphia. Franklin, Brockden Brown, Poe, tended its early growth. Many, indeed, of our literary leaders, notably Lowell, Curtis, Warner, Howells, Aldrich, have sat, at one time or another, in editorial chairs, while in these days of realistic fiction the profession of journalism often promotes young reporters to the grade of literature. With the *Scribner's*, launched by Dr. Holland early in the seventies, the handsome illustrated magazine came into being, while the nineties are witnessing a curious outcropping of bibelots. Our magazines, besides employing artists and engravers in large numbers, provide a literary market of a higher order than that furnished by press syndicates and newspapers. They have had much to do with developing the short story, dialect studies, and light verse, but their entertaining, sketchy quality is injurious to the mental digestion.

Music has become a recognized factor in American life. If we have no Beethoven yet, no Mendelssohn, we are grateful for a Thomas and a Damrosch. It has been a century of musical education rather than creation. Conservatories of music have arisen in our chief cities. Foreign artists reap fortunes from their American trips. Every season German opera draws its thousands, and Italian opera its tens of thousands.

Lanier has many sympathizers in his saying that music and an open fire are the indispensables of a home. The Germans enthusiastically promote musical culture, especially in Chicago and other cities of the West. But for all this, we are not yet, as a nation, musically sensitive or musically expressive. Our democratic eagerness to become capable of the best, the determination to achieve a sincere and intelligent delight in every form of beauty, is more marked among us than the naturally æsthetic temperament. We are practically without folk-songs. The "merry whistled tunes" of the barefoot boy cheer our village streets, but our college glees are shallow and hard beside the romantic balladry of German students. Something of spirit and of passion, however, still haunts the songs of the Civil War. Our best indigenous melodies, those that beguiled the weariness of rice-swamp, cotton-field, and sugar-plantation, that rose from negro cabin and forest camp-meeting, are already becoming a lost art. The meekness, the yearning, the pathos so weirdly interblent with those artless strains are hardly within the compass of the young voices of the colored race. That piteous beauty was inwrought with slavery. The tones of freedom miss the subtler cadences. It is reasonable to expect, however, contributions to music, as well as to oratory and the other arts, from the Afro-Americans in their later development. The *Uncle Remus* stories have crystallized a part of their unconscious literature. Paul Lawrence Dunbar has recently

come before the public as a promising negro poet, but it is too early yet to ask much at their hands. Nor have the Indians spoken through the arts. Altar-mounds and shell-heaps, the musical names of lake and mountain, fragments of folk-lore, tell us far too little of that proud race we have dispossessed. The *Leather-Stocking Novels*, *Hiawatha*, and *Ramona* have tried to be their interpreters, but we look to the graduates of Hampton and Carlisle for a more authentic voice.

In the realm of painting, negro scenes have been rendered by a few recent artists, and the Indians have at least one champion of the brush; but, as a rule, our leading painters of to-day concern themselves little with distinctively American subjects. Our sculptors, from the nature of the case, are more constant. The point of departure for the art of this third period of the century may be taken as 1863, when the corner-stone of the New York Academy of Design was laid. There was a passing reflection of English Pre-Raphaelitism, but the chosen school of American painting since the Civil War has been Paris. Even sculpture, within the last quarter-century, has turned from Rome to the new inspiration by the Seine. If Story and Miss Hosmer have been faithful to Italy, St. Gaudens brings the fresh power of France. With a native predilection for natural scenery, American painters fell readily in with the French movement toward landscape, yet our artists, many of them half Europeans by residence and habit, bind them-

selves to no school, and may be distinguished by no dominant national note. Inness, Vedder, Sargent, stand for widely varying fashions. For the last twenty years, the work of our painters and sculptors has conspicuously illustrated American dexterity no less than American versatility. For the first time in our art history, technique has been mastered. In the plastic arts, as in music, the education of the people goes on apace. Under the golden touch of millionnaires and the strong impulsion of public spirit, picture galleries have been established of late years not only in the principal cities, but in quiet towns and on many a college campus. Private collections of high merit are accumulated, masterpieces are loaned for public view, art schools flourish, and the amateur and connoisseur lend a flavor to daily talk. The great Expositions, culminating in the World's Fair at Chicago, have been of incalculable benefit not only in the direct patronage of American artists, but in radiating æsthetic interest throughout the land. The magazines, with their famous illustrators, the new stained glass that Tiffany and La Farge are putting into our churches, even the fads for wood-carving and photography, have culture-values.

President Jefferson was once moved to remark that "the genius of architecture seemed to have shed a peculiar malediction over America." After the happy development of the Colonial dwelling-house, there succeeded a century of irresponsible experiments. Capitols with Roman domes, banks adapted from Doric temples, plain

commercial blocks and Gothic school-houses, Queen Anne cottages and barrack hotels, make a fantastic medley. Our pet principle of Independence, as applied to building, leaves much to be desired. From all this chaos there has been evolved no style distinctively American, unless Richardson, who studied in Paris and began his professional activity at the close of the Civil War, may be thought to have given the hint. The hope for architecture, as for all our arts, including literature, lies in the stricter training and wider outlook of our new craftsmen. This period of technical discipline is but the sharpening of the tool for finer and more momentous tasks. The White City flashed a vision that is not forgotten.

The patriotic temper, just now on the *qui vive* for the Great American Novel, is experiencing a slight revival of faith in our long-lingering drama. Such actors as Booth, Barrett, Jefferson, have lent new dignity to the stage. Our modern theatres are luxurious, if not fireproof, and certain companies, as Daly's of New York, make a study of artistic settings. The audiences are of better quality than heretofore. But as for the plays themselves, with the Wild West relegated to Buffalo Bill, and with the memories of the war too sore for any large encouragement of Rebellion drama, managers have been compelled to draw from French and English sources. Now and then, however, a native bit of society comedy brightens the boards, and our theatrical critics, from their watch-towers of observation, call lustily that the

American drama is almost in sight at last. Meanwhile, Howell's parlor farces are the delight of amateurs.

No observer of life lives in a golden age. We look back to "the good old times" and forward to the millennium, but our own era misses majesty. This last third of the century may yet win "a glory from its being far," but it looks to-day like a season of reaction from our crucial strife and of preparation for the deeds to be. If literature tends at present to be a craft rather than a calling, if our typical author is

> "ne'er at leisure
> To be himself, he has such tides of business,"

we can at least rejoice in the wide diffusion and good average quality of the writing ability. Academic treatises, especially on social questions, are showered from the press. If the master-songs are missing, tuneful voices answer one another from Appledore to the wheatlands, and on to "white Sierra's verge." With Mary E. Wilkins and Sarah Orne Jewett exploring the nooks and corners of New England, with James Lane Allen interpreting the life of Kentucky, and Thomas Nelson Page that of Virginia, with Mary Murfree revealing the secrets of the Tennessee mountains, with Hamlin Garland doing angry honor to the western farmer's toil, with Mary Halleck Foote portraying that wild mining life whose prose epic was begun by Bret Harte in *The Luck of Roaring Camp*, the length and breadth of the land are finding speech.

Over a century ago one of our Huguenot immigrants, Crevecœur, wrote hopefully of his adopted country:

"Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigor, and industry, which began long since in the East; they will finish the great circle." A review of the hundred years brings courage for the journey but begun.

# CHAPTER IV

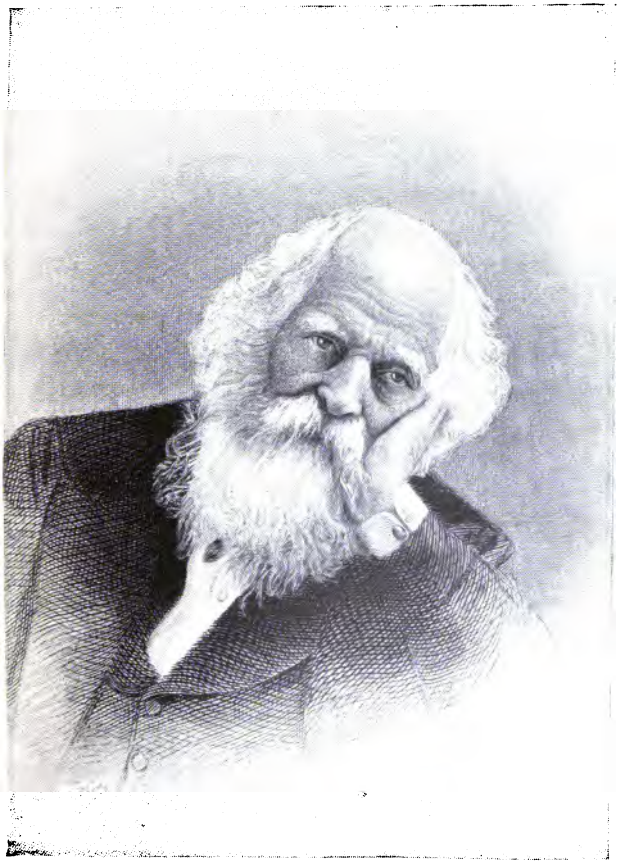
## NATIONAL ERA: POETRY

Let the great world bustle on
With war and trade, with camp and town,
A thousand men shall dig and eat;
At forge and furnace thousands sweat;
And thousands sail the purple sea,
And give or take the stroke of war,
Or crowd the market and bazaar;
Oft shall war end, and peace return,
And cities rise where cities burn,
Ere one man my hill shall climb,
Who can turn the golden rhyme.

— EMERSON, *Saadi.*

I. **William Cullen Bryant** is the patriarch of American poetry. He alone comes over to us from the eighteenth century. *Thanatopsis* was published two years before Lowell and Whitman were born. This hardly constitutes antiquity, but taken with the living memory and common portrait of Bryant as a bald-crowned, shaggy-browed, rugged old sage, his lower face obscured in a snowy drift of beard, it has impressed him on the popular imagination as a very Father Time. Yet he was only a six-year-old when the century was rounded, "a little chap with flaxen hair and flashing eyes," much in awe of Squire Snell, his Calvinistic grandfather, but more at ease with

his grandmother, who used to chalk him a delightfully dreadful figure of the devil, "Old Crooktail," on the kitchen floor. Their daughter, Bryant's mother, was a New England housewife of the firm, efficient pattern, very sure as to the dividing line between good and evil, having her own opinion even of her husband's idol, Mr. Pope, but intensely preoccupied with the practical problem of making the two ends meet. There was the more need for her energetic industry, her mending and saving, in that her husband, descended, like herself, from the Plymouth Pilgrims, was touched with the dreamer's malady. He was of vigorous frame, a physician, as his father and grandfather had been before him, and a man of prominence in local politics, but he was always poor. A new book could make him oblivious both of patient and fee. A versifier himself, he was his son's sympathetic critic, and hardly less helpfully, his companion in botanizing strolls through the picturesque hill-country enclosing Cummington, then a new settlement in western Massachusetts. The Snell homestead, where Dr. Bryant early brought his family to live, was no bad place for rearing boys. The farm work, when not too hard, was healthy; the homespun clothing comfortable, and the simple diet wholesome, while, in one way or another, the verse-loving father found money for books. After supper and chores, the Bryant boys would fling themselves down on the floor, with brown heads to the crackling fire, and pore over Shakespeare and Spenser, Wordsworth, Cowper, and Scott the winter evenings



William Cullen Bryant

through, the grim bundle of birchen rods hanging on the wall above. They delighted in Pope's *Iliad*, secretly whittling out wooden swords for themselves and trimming up old hats with plumes of tow, helmet fashion, in preparation for heroic combats in the haymow. In the prevailing religious atmosphere, William put up private prayer that he might be a poet. There was talk of college, and he was tutored for a while by the Plainfield minister, who gave him bread and milk board and Greek instruction for a dollar a week. It was a wonderful amount of Greek that Bryant got for his dollar, but after a few months at Williams, his father's poverty put an end to college prospects. In the summer of his disappointment, the thoughtful youth, not yet eighteen, wrote *Thanatopsis*. The poet had reached full stature. Of his remaining sixty-six years, fourteen went to the study and practice of the law in western Massachusetts, and the rest to editorial work, chiefly on *The Evening Post*, in New York City — years sweetened with home joys, brightened with congenial companionships, enriched with foreign travel, and crowned with abundant honor. He was a good business man, a journalist of honorable record, a speaker much in demand for "memorial tributes," and a fine example of the old-fashioned citizen, prudent, sagacious, just. A poet to the end, he drew his inspiration still from the fountains of his youth — the secrets of the Hampshire hills and the grave, pure temper of his childhood's home. Those noble translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, colossal tasks accomplished after

he had climbed the threescore years and ten, fulfilled his boyish homage. *The Flood of Years*, written in his eighty-second summer, echoes the very tone of *Thanatopsis*.

Bryant's poetry is stately, lofty, clear. A man of practised self-control, who from childhood to the day of his death rose early, ate sparingly, exercised regularly, his verse is equally subject to rule. No impetuous measures broke from his pen. Respect for law and order, personal reserve, and coldness of temperament are so far from being the traditional make-up of a poet that it is no wonder the critics were puzzled. *Blackwood's Magazine* characterized Bryant, when he had reached the age of thirty, as "a sensible young man of a thrifty disposition, who knows how to manage a few plain ideas in a very handsome way." His themes, in truth, were few. He cared for freedom, for the moral aspect of life, and supremely for nature. Son of the Pilgrims though he was, the poet in him was half a pagan, but only half. His stern Anglo-Saxon brooding upon death and the grave is touched, at times, with quiet Christian hope. Something of Roman pride mingles in *Thanatopsis* with the sombre courage and ethical resolve of Puritanism. Upon the poem is no trace of youthful turbulence or rebellion. It is a clear-sighted recognition of the inevitable end of life, and a solemn acquiescence in the universal destiny. Allied to this haunting sadness for "the fading race of men" is Bryant's special sense of pathos in the passing of the Indians from their ancient hunting-grounds.

But as the New England arbutus nestles at the base of granite rocks, so from among the massive, blank-verse reveries comes now and then the fragrance of a dainty lyric. With little fancy and less humor, Bryant could yet be spirited, as in the *Song of Marion's Men*, playful, as in *Robert of Lincoln*, and exquisitely tender, as in *June*. *To a Waterfowl* is distinguished by a peculiar uplift. The sunset so vividly pictured, the solitary flight of the bird through "desert and illimitable air," and the tranquil faith of the no less isolated beholder unite in a rarely imaginative appeal. But, in general, Bryant's self-repression and narrow range are to his disadvantage as an artist. Only when he stands in "Nature's loneliness" is he richly poetic. "He is original," says Emerson, "because he is sincere, — a true painter of the face of the country and of the sentiment of his own people. It is his proper praise that he first, and he only, made known to mankind our northern landscape, — its summer splendor, its autumn russet, its winter lights and glooms." Now at last New England scenery enters literature. Notwithstanding a certain monotony in Bryant's nature poems, and a preference for broad effects, his detail is true. From boyhood he had known "the yellow violet's modest bell," "gay circles of anemones,"

> "The little wind-flower, whose just opened eye
> Is blue as the spring heaven it gazes at,"

the gentian,

"that, in the breeze,
Nods lonely, of her beauteous race the last,"

"every moss-cup of the rock,"

"and all the flowers
That tuft the woodland floor, or overarch
The streamlet."

Before he had studied Greek, he was versed in "the gossip of swallows" and the "mellow descant" of the woodthrush. He sang the circle of the year from the "sparkling frost-work" to the "golden lights," but his autumnal spirit was most at home in the "colored shades" of October or in that enchanted season of Indian summer,

"When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill."

His personal loves and sorrows were blended with the consciousness of out-of-door phenomena. His "fairest of the rural maids" is likened in her several charms to sylvan springs and herbs, to winds and shadows. His sister perished "with the flowers." Human as he was on the side turned toward daily life, in the poet there abode something lonely and majestic, something elemental.

II. **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**, also of "Mayflower" descent, was more gently and more liberally nurtured. His mother, the daughter and sister of Revolutionary heroes, was a delicate, sweet-souled woman, and his father, a leading lawyer of Portland, Maine, was noted

Henry W Longfellow
1840

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Publishers of Longfellow's Works.

for courtesy as well as public spirit. In the "beautiful town" of the poet's birth, with its "breezy dome of groves" and "sheen of the far-surrounding seas," there passed upon his boyhood the ocean-spell, the "longings wild and vain" stirred by

> "the black wharves and the slips
> And the sea-tides tossing free;
> And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips
> And the beauty and mystery of the ships
> And the magic of the sea."

At home he read the English classics, although Irving's *Sketch-Book* was his first literary fascination. Soon the blue-eyed, rosy-cheeked boy, who began, at thirteen, to print his verses, over the signature of *Henry*, in the poet's corner of the *Portland Gazette*, had developed into the winsome young collegian, studious, a trifle fastidious, but genial as sunshine. Bowdoin College was his Alma Mater. The class of 1825 numbered some thirty-eight young men, including Pierce, the future President, Abbott, the future historian, and Hawthorne. Longfellow, graduated at eighteen, stood fourth in rank. His Commencement oration, limited to seven minutes, had for subject *Our Native Writers*. His own turn for literature, attested not only by college exercises, but by a few magazine poems after the model of Bryant, secured him the appointment to a new chair of modern languages at Bowdoin. After a year of rest and reading at home and three years of study abroad, chiefly in the countries of southern Europe, he took up the cares of his profes-

sion, marrying, shortly after, the daughter of a Portland neighbor. During this peaceful apprenticeship at Bowdoin, the youthful professor, who had ceased to write verses, published his first original volume, *Outre-Mer*, in plan and style resembling the *Sketch-Book*, though more blithely boyish in sentiment. After five years of residence in Brunswick, Longfellow was invited to succeed Professor Ticknor, at Harvard, as Smith Professor of Modern Languages, and again he sailed for Europe, this time with the intention of studying the northern tongues. At Rotterdam sorrow waited him. There his young wife suffered and died. "He bowed his head, and would fain have been bound up in the same sheaf with the sweet blue flower." In his grief and yearning, German romanticism, with its tenderness, its dreaminess, its fulness of feeling, laid strong hold upon him. *Hyperion*, a prose transcript of his emotions during that year of lonely wandering, is a clearer, softer echo of Richter. And now the poetic fountains, dumb for nearly a decade, were at last unsealed. Longfellow's thirtieth birthday found him duly installed in Washington's chamber of the Craigie House at Cambridge, writing *Voices of the Night*. Thenceforth his career was distinctively that of a poet. A rambling romance of New England village life, *Kavanagh*, was his farewell to prose. He held his Harvard chair for nearly twenty years, retiring before he was fifty. Tragedy touched his later life in the death by fire, before his eyes, of the second Mrs. Longfellow, a Boston lady whom the poet had wooed through his *Hyperion*. As Bryant after

the death of his wife sought relief in Homeric translations, so Longfellow strove to forget himself in a metrical rendering, scholarly and sensitive, of Dante's *Divina Commedia.* He had from his student days a peculiar ease in translation, and, to the end, his successive volumes abounded in versions of foreign lyrics, but it was his original poetry that crowned him with honor abroad, and at home with such affection as has blessed few singers of the earth. The *Voices of the Night,* issued in his thirty-third year, breathed a purity and nobility of spirit that gave it household welcome the country over. *A Psalm of Life, The Light of Stars, Footsteps of Angels,* clothed with a fresh benignant beauty the human pain and struggle. A second volume, two years later, confirmed his fame. Such ballads as *The Skeleton in Armor* and *The Wreck of the Hesperus* did not go begging for plaudits. The antislavery poems of the following year, subdued though they seem beside Whittier's passionate protests, have Longfellow's own pleasant, flexible movement and earnest sympathy. *The Spanish Student,* a well-devised drama, was succeeded by an artistic group of lyrics, including *The Belfry of Bruges* and *The Norman Baron.* The foreign flavor of Longfellow's poetry sweetened the American air. This Harvard professor was unconsciously a great forerunner of university extension. He was becoming the poetic schoolmaster of the land, not only winning it to the love of song, but accustoming his Puritan-bred, utilitarian audience to the richer lights in which Europe views the

human spectacle. In *Evangeline*, *Hiawatha*, and *The Courtship of Miles Standish* Longfellow chose American themes, but he used a classical measure for the pathetic tale of Acadie and the half-humorous Plymouth tradition, while he borrowed the Finnish epic-verse for his wildwood Indian legend. In the *Tales of the Wayside Inn* he built, as a rule, with foreign timber. Meanwhile his lyrics, garnered in an occasional volume, kept the sweet old charm, a charm compounded of gracious feeling and delicate taste. Songs of family loves and losses, of Cambridge friendships, of memories of youth alternated with snatches of Saxon and Icelandic story. Rabbinical tale and mediæval legend mingled with strains of our Civil War. But loyal as the public remained to his lighter verse, the long-planned, threefold tragedy of *Christus* aroused, apart from *The Golden Legend*, but little enthusiasm, while his *Judas Maccabæus* and *Masque of Pandora*, diverse experiments in drama, pleased his readers less than the wedding revery entitled *The Hanging of the Crane*. The fiftieth anniversary of the class of 1825 called forth the twilight notes of *Morituri Salutamus*, but before the darkness fell, there were yet seven years of music. White-haired, tranquil, with a stately gentleness of mien and an unwearied courtesy in greeting all sorts and conditions of guests, still the poet sent forth from the beautiful study of the Craigie House booklet after booklet. In *Kéramos* the aged pilgrim, resting after many journeys, dreamed again of alien lands and races, lulled in his trance by the drowsy song of the Potter:

"Turn, turn, my wheel! All life is brief;
What now is bud will soon be leaf,
What now is leaf will soon decay."

*Ultima Thule* reflected the chastened glory of old age as truly, as attractively, as *Voices of the Night* had mirrored the restless heart of youth. Once more from the little volume entitled *In the Harbor*, printed after the poet's death, the tuneful, familiar notes were floated back, while *Michael Angelo* gravely closed the dramas.

"The White Mr. Longfellow," as Björnson called him, is the surprise of honey in the old lion of Puritanism. "Out of the strong came forth sweetness." A professor in his library, among many books in many tongues, he was, nevertheless, a poet of stories and feelings, so simple that the little children love him. It may be true that his imagination was moderate, his fancy sometimes forced and artificial, his passion decorously pent within the meek New England limits of trust and resignation. Notwithstanding his far range of subject, critics have styled him the Poet of the Commonplace. It is no mean title. To lift the commonplace into the bright air of poetry is to confer one of the richest of boons on dull humanity. As Bryant sublimed our thought of nature, so Longfellow hallowed our human life itself.

III. **James Russell Lowell**, who succeeded Longfellow in the chair of Modern Languages at Harvard, is often accounted our leading man of letters. His critical essays, his public addresses, his poetical satires, his odes and other lyrics, wide as is the range they cover, do

not exhaust the list of his services. In proportion as he quickened the national consciousness and purified the national ideal, he furthered American literature by enriching American life. Of his direct contribution, only the poetry will be considered in the present chapter.

He was the scion of a prosperous and scholarly line. A thriving manufacturing town of Massachusetts and a free lectureship of Boston bear the family name in honor of two of the poet's progenitors. But he was proudest of the ancestor who, in 1820, drafted the slavery-abolishing clause in the Constitution of the old Bay State.

The son of an upright and learned clergyman and of a Scotch-descended, ballad-loving mother, with a library of some four thousand well-selected volumes for his boyish browsing, a graduate of Harvard, a reluctant law-student, and a lawyer whose desk was strewn with verses, he was, in a sense, committed to culture from his cradle. His youth had been blithe with aspirations, chiefly, though not wholly, after poetic fame. "Here I am in my garret," he wrote in later life, from Elmwood. "I slept here when I was a little curly-headed boy, and used to see visions between me and the ceiling, and dream the so often recurring dream of having the earth put into my hand like an orange."

But when Lowell came to manhood, the air of New England tingled with the antislavery reform, and the young poet, with ready ardor, following the beck of the lady whom he loved, flung himself into the fray, and took the blows of battle. The spear of Poe marked him for a

flashing thrust: "Mr. Lowell is one of the most rabid of the Abolition fanatics; and no Southerner who does not wish to be insulted, and at the same time revolted by a bigotry the most absolutely blind and deaf, should ever touch a volume by this author. His fanaticism about slavery is a mere local outbreak of the same innate wrong-headedness which, if he owned slaves, would manifest itself in atrocious ill-treatment of them, with murder of any abolitionist who should endeavor to set them free. A fanatic of Mr. L.'s species is simply a fanatic for the sake of fanaticism, and *must* be a fanatic in whatever circumstance you place him."

There was a grain of truth in this. Lowell was poetical, but, even more, he was ethical. The fairest vision could not withhold him when there was a call for valor to the fore. At the outset, he cherished brave hopes of uniting the functions of poet and reformer: "My calling is clear to me. I am never lifted up to any peak of vision — and moments of almost fearless illumination I have sometimes — but that, when I look down in hope to see some valley of the Beautiful Mountains, I behold nothing but blackened ruins; and the moans of the down-trodden, the world over — but chiefly here in our own land — come up to my ear, instead of the happy songs of the husbandmen, reaping and binding the sheaves of light; yet these, too, I hear not seldom. Then I feel how great is the office of poet, could I but even dare to fill it. Then it seems as if my heart would break in pouring out one glorious song that should be the gospel

of Reform, full of consolation and strength to the oppressed, yet falling gently and restoringly as dew on the withered youth-flowers of the oppressor. That way my madness lies, if any."

At twenty-two, Lowell published a little volume of verses, and at twenty-five, in the year of his marriage, a second. The following year came a voice from the student in *Conversations on Some of the Old Poets*. Three years later appeared a third volume of verse and, in the same year, *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, written within the compass of forty-eight happy hours. Still on the hither side of thirty, Lowell discharged that quiverful of arrows, the *Fable for Critics*, and during the Mexican War there sprang, one by one, from the indignant soul of the satirist, the *Biglow Papers*. Here, at last, he was speaking in full voice as poet-reformer. But the era of prose was at hand. At thirty-two, Lowell first visited Europe and, on returning, delivered a course of lectures on English poetry before the Lowell Institute. At thirty-six, after two years more of European study, he took the Harvard chair which Longfellow had resigned. To the cares of his professorship, he added the editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly* and, later, of the *North American Review*. Culling his best essays from these and other periodicals, he gradually gathered them into volumes, *Fireside Travels*, *Among My Books*, and *My Study Windows*. But poet and reformer were not wholly merged in the professor, the editor, the man of culture. The second series of *Biglow Papers*, and the

*Harvard Commemoration Ode* glow with patriot passion. At fifty, another volume of collected poems, *Under the Willows*, was issued, and a year later, *The Cathedral.* Lowell was abroad for two years in these honored fifties, and at fifty-eight entered into the public service of his country as Minister to Spain. He was transferred in 1880 to England, where he represented his native land with unprecedented geniality and grace. Recalled by Cleveland, Lowell printed four volumes of essays and addresses, and, when hard on seventy, a little book of poems, *Heartsease and Rue.* The scant verses of the last three years were published together after his death.

Lowell's earlier poems, fluent and pure-hearted, show no trace of his characteristic humor, nor, indeed, much individuality of any kind. Unconscious echoes of Keats, of Hood, of Shelley, haunt their cadences, and the Tennysonian flavor is unmistakable. Lowell's first appearance as a satirist and wit astonished the reviewers, and Poe, with no intention of being amusing, magisterially remarked that the author of the *Fable for Critics* "could not do a better thing than to take the advice of those who mean him well, in spite of his fanaticism, and leave prose, with satiric verse, to those who are better able to manage them, while he contents himself with that class of poetry for which, and for which alone, he seems to have an especial vocation — the poetry of sentiment."

It was something of a shock to Lowell himself to find his *Biglow Papers* captivating that public which his softer strains had failed to move. And yet here and

there a lyric had fallen from his pen to which the heart of the people had throbbed response, as *My Love, A Requiem, The Changeling, She Came and Went.* And now and then he had succeeded in flinging his ethical enthusiasm into forceful song, most notably in *The Present Crisis. Sir Launfal* found large audience. Lowell made June dearer to New England. He felt divinity in every bud. To him nature was fair not only in itself, but as something "for the gladness of heaven to shine through." The *Fable for Critics* remains, for all its rattling fun, a marvel of sagacity. While Lowell was a baby at Elmwood, Cooper was putting pen to his first story, Irving had just published the *Sketch-Book*, Bryant was a grave young lawyer, with *Thanatopsis* two years old in print, Emerson was a dreamy student at Harvard, Hawthorne, in preparation for Bowdoin, was writing Latin exercises, Whittier was a barefoot boy, feeding his father's kine, Holmes and Longfellow were bright little lads, the well-nurtured sons of cultivated households, and Poe, at school in Great Britain, was a lonely and wayward child. On these immediate contemporaries Lowell, in half-frolicsome, half-earnest mood, passed keen judgments almost invariably verified by time. He even recognized his own peril, how ill the artist in him was likely to fare at the hands of the moral enthusiast:

> "His lyre has some chords that would ring pretty well,
> But he'd rather by half make a drum of the shell,
> And rattle away till he's old as Methusalem,
> At the head of a march to the last new Jerusalem."

The first series of *The Biglow Papers* voiced the protest of the American conscience against the Mexican War. The war went on, but Lowell had well begun a political satire unsurpassed in the English language for its blending of kindly wit and noble wrath. He had, furthermore, made the Yankee nasals sing, and revealed the sound, straight pith of the gnarly New England character. The second series, called forth by the Civil War, mingled the old humor with a beauty and pathos to which the uncouth dialect seemed no more a hindrance than the Scotch of Burns. The *Harvard Commemoration Ode* was the solemn chant of triumph after strife, — a chant broken with sobs, but rising to "a peal of exultation." In *Under the Willows* the lifeworn poet, twice made a widower and thrice bereaved of children, strove to sing, as in youth, the jocund joys of June, but the famous lyrics of that volume, *The First Snowfall*, *After the Burial*, *The Dead House*, were costly with heartbreak. *The Cathedral*, marred as it is by Lowell's cardinal faults of carelessness, discursiveness, and frequent lapses in taste, pays the debt of thousands of American pilgrims in magnificent praise of the mediæval minster and in the resultant musings on Him who recognizes worship in "the climbing instinct." This ode makes it evident, however, that the artist had grown presumptuous. He had not schooled his powers. The world of talk and action had been too strong for him. He had refused to give his life for poetry, but the summits of art may be won by nothing less. Hence

Lowell's achievement in verse, for all its occasional splendor, remains irregular and incomplete. When he ceased to be young, he ceased to be primarily a poet. To the end his heart had "song-birds in it," but their flight was ever rarer and less high.

IV. **Oliver Wendell Holmes** stands third in the trio of Cambridge scholar-poets. Longfellow's prose is of slight value, but it is a question whether Lowell's essays are not more precious than his poems. About the relative merit of Holmes's prose and verse there is no question at all. Sorry as we should be to lose the sparkling rhymster, it is The Autocrat whom we positively could not spare. The family tree of Holmes boasted the name of Anne Bradstreet, who would doubtless have upset her inkhorn in dismay to foresee the poetic levity of her great-great-great-great-grandson. Holmes's father, a Cambridge clergyman of antiquarian tastes, came of a sturdy Connecticut stock. The poet's mother, brightest and most sociable of little women, was of Dutch descent. Thus belonging, as his own wit phrased it, to "the Brahmin caste of New England" and born, at Cambridge, within sight of the gilded dome of the Boston statehouse, "the Hub of the solar system," the poet was bred as became such privileges of race and residence. He went to the Cambridgeport Academy, with Margaret Fuller and the younger Richard Henry Dana. He frequented the Athenæum Picture Gallery and looked "through the japanned fishhorns" at the masterpieces of Copley and Stuart, Trumbull and Allston and West. At home he

"bumped about among books" in his father's library. Prepared at Phillips Academy, Andover, Holmes entered Harvard at sixteen. He was duly graduated with the "Boys of '29," whose industrious laureate he presently became. To Benjamin Pierce, renowned as mathematician and astronomer, and James Freeman Clarke, his "dear Saint James," Holmes penned individual tributes, while at one annual class dinner after another his ready flow of verse revived College memories, proclaimed class glories, tenderly lamented the dead, and merrily hailed the living, as, for example, his reverend fellow-poet,

> "a nice youngster of excellent pith, —
> Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith;
> But he shouted a song for the brave and the free, —
> Just read on his medal, 'My country, of thee!'"

Holmes had tried his hand at verse while still a boy at Phillips. At Harvard he won undergraduate renown by his waggish contributions to *The Collegian*. He first came fairly before the public with a ringing lyric, *Old Ironsides*, printed in the *Boston Advertiser* the year after his graduation. This impetuous song preserved the famous frigate "Constitution" for half a century more. The young poet was then flirting with the law, but jilted it for medicine. After several years of study in Boston and Paris, he took his degree from the Harvard Medical School. In this same year, 1836, he published a thin volume of verse, containing, with other lyrics of less note, *The September Gale*, *My Aunt*, and *The Last Leaf*. This third poem is rich in that tenderest pathos where the smile

and the tear come together, but the most of Holmes's verses were so jocund that he used to claim they hurt his career as a physician.

"Besides — my prospects — don't you know that people won't employ
A man that wrongs his manliness by laughing like a boy?
And suspect the azure blossom that unfolds upon a shoot,
As if wisdom's old potato could not flourish at its root?"

The dangerously gay young doctor, who had announced that the smallest fevers would be gratefully received, gave up his practice to take the chair of anatomy and physiology at Dartmouth, but after two years at Hanover, Boston drew him back. He married and made his home in the pleasant Puritan city from which he was to stray no more. In 1848 he joined the faculty of the Harvard Medical School, occupying, he liked to say, not a chair, but a whole settee. That institution has largely increased its corps of instruction since Holmes first brought it his brilliant services, but, as he roguishly remarked, "it is not always the insect with the most legs that goes the fastest." Here for thirty-five years he pursued his chosen subject with high distinction, while in the lecture-room the sprightly, clever little gentleman was the delight of a generation of trooping classes. Not until he had exceeded by three years the allotted term of human life did he withdraw from the active duties of his professorship. Yet he lived on to the age of eighty-five, lived on after friends and classmates, after Bryant, Longfellow, Emerson, Lowell, Whittier, after his be-

loved wife, only daughter, and the younger of his two sons.

"Lonely, how lonely! is the snowy peak!"

But the last leaf on the tree kept its dancing motion to the end. The affections of the people centred about their kindly mirth-maker all the more closely as the reverend brotherhood of New England poets grew less and less. He was feasted by his publishers and by the medical profession, he was welcomed and honored across the water, his birthdays were greeted with ever warmer congratulations from far and near, and, when the news of his death went abroad, it was like the tolling of a bell. With him an era of our literature had passed away.

Until 1857 Holmes had been known as a humorous poet. His prose consisted of medical treatises. He was in demand as a Lyceum lecturer on the modest terms, as stated by himself, of "fifteen dollars and expenses, a room with a fire in it, in a public house, and a mattress to sleep on, — not a feather-bed." But with the establishment of the *Atlantic Monthly* the versatile Doctor blossomed out into a prose classic. *The Autocrat at the Breakfast Table*, *The Professor at the Breakfast Table*, *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, *Over the Tea-Cups*, stood for a fresh force in letters. The discussion of these, as of Holmes's novels, *Elsie Venner*, *The Guardian Angel*, *A Mortal Antipathy*, comes later, but it was in those Atlantic serials that some of his best poems first appeared, — the delectable

*One-Hoss Shay*, for example, and that high-thoughted lyric, best beloved by its author, *The Chambered Nautilus*. Laughter is so good a gift to mortals that we instinctively associate Holmes with such twinkling absurdities as *The Height of the Ridiculous* and *The Broomstick Train*, but *Dorothy Q.*, *The Voiceless*, *Union and Liberty*, *Grandmother's Story of Bunker Hill Battle*, show the diversity of his gifts. Yet such golden grains are scattered scantily in much chaff. Nearly half his verses were written for occasions, — dinners, fairs, funerals, anything under the sun that meant a concourse of Americans.

> "I'm a florist in verse, and what *would* people say
> If I came to a banquet without my bouquet?"

Writing so often with the success of the hour in view emphasized Holmes' tendency to be neat, telling, effective, at the expense of finer values. He was old fashioned, too, in his poetic tastes, liking so well the "strong heroic line" of Dryden and Pope that the "staid footsteps" of his "square-toed song" never deigned to learn the lighter measures of modern lyric verse. His poems are, as a whole, autobiographic in flavor, personal, almost confidential, — recitations still inseparable from the memory of the reciter, from the nimble, fragile little figure, the old face bright under the snowy hair with the unextinguished zest for life, the winning appeal of smile and voice, the frolic and the pathos that radiated from him and swayed great audiences in sympathetic waves. "A fellow of infinite jest" though he

John G. Whittier

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was, it behooved his hearers to have their handkerchiefs out.

V. **John Greenleaf Whittier.** — In this Quaker laureate of Puritan New England, this man of peace who fanned the flames of war, this singer with the fresh voice of a Burns and the holy heart of a George Herbert, we have to face certain contradictions, not the least of which is that a Quaker should be a poet at all. It is a silent sect. America is fortunate in that two of its devoutest members here, Woolman and Whittier, have been moved to utterance. Whittier stands apart from the Harvard professors, as he stands apart from the Concord philosophers. His ancestry, his rearing, his temperament, are unique in our poetic annals.

The Whittier immigrant, English born, is said to have been of Huguenot descent. He was something of a giant, as giants go, and, even when Indian troubles were thickest, sufficed for his own defence in the log-cabin on the Merrimac. Of peaceful disposition, he appears to have been well inclined toward George Fox, but not himself a member of the new Society of Friends. Of his ten children, Joseph, the youngest, married a Quaker wife and retained the Haverhill homestead. His descendants adhered to the Society. Of his nine children, Joseph, again the youngest, married a Sarah Greenleaf, also of Huguenot origin. Of their eleven children, John, the father of our poet, won a bride from an eminent Quaker family of northern New Hampshire, and remained on the ancestral farm. Whittier, then, was born to an inheri

tance of the purest religious feeling. When his faith in God and his love for man bade him range himself beside the champions of the slave, in that militant line with Garrison and Phillips and Sumner, the Huguenot and Quaker blood in his veins must have throbbed response.

> "Where now with pain thou treadest, trod
> The whitest of the saints of God!
> To show thee where their feet were set,
> The light which led them shineth yet."

Bred as he was amid the fair river scenery beloved of his fathers, and on acres which their spades had broken, his youth was passed in a simplicity and stillness like that of the meetings of the Friends. His best schooling was the out-of-door life of a poor farmer's son. No barefoot boy knew more

> "Of the wild bee's morning chase,
> Of the wild-flower's time and place,
> Flight of fowl and habitude
> Of the tenants of the wood."

Whittier has pictured for us in his exquisite idyl, *Snowbound*, the sequestered farm-house and quiet family circle,

> "The dear home-faces whereupon
> That fitful firelight paled and shone."

Even so lonely, so walled in from the wisdom of the world to hearth-side lore of Indians and witches, woodcraft and Quaker saints, was that pure boyhood of his. When the harvesting was well over, he would make the

most of the winter term of the district school. For books he had the Bible and a few Journals of exemplary Friends, and at fourteen a precious volume of Burns came into his hands. It fared ill that day with the mowing. A few years later he visited Boston, in homespun coat and broadbrim, and brought back Shakespeare's plays. His own early verses were crude enough, but his mother and sisters cherished the stiff "pieces" on *William Penn*, *Benevolence*, and *The Exile's Departure*, metrical exercises which, after the seven cows were milked, the rough-handed lad would laboriously write out on foolscap. His elder sister,

> "Impulsive, earnest, prompt to act
> And make the generous thought a fact,"

sent the last-mentioned, signed "W.," to young Garrison's new weekly, the *Newburyport Free Press*. It was a glorious moment when the poet of nineteen, mending a stone wall with his father, looked up as the postman passed on horseback, caught the newspaper tossed over to him, and opened it to see his own verses glittering in print. A second poem was sent and published. The vigorous young editor drove fourteen miles to call upon the shy ploughboy and urge him to obtain an education. Quaker distrust of culture and the habitual lack of money stood in the way, but the women overcame the father's scruples, and Greenleaf, as he was called at home, or Uncle Toby, as his schoolmates nicknamed him, earned, by cobbling and teaching, his fees for two terms at the Haverhill Academy. This was the extent of Whittier's

schooling. He had gained some local repute as a writer, however, and maintained himself for a few years by journalism in Boston, Haverhill, and Hartford. But in 1831, the year in which Whittier issued a little volume of sketches in prose and verse, Garrison established *The Liberator*, and the passionate young Quaker, sacrificing political ambitions and literary dreams to the rude labor of reform, threw himself heart and soul into the unpopular cause of Abolition.

> "Better than self-indulgent years
> The outflung heart of youth,
> Than pleasant songs in idle ears
> The tumult of the truth."

There was certainly no lack of tumult. Garrison was mobbed in Boston. Whittier was stoned in Concord, New Hampshire, and pelted with rotten eggs in Newburyport. In Philadelphia, where he tried to edit an antislavery paper, Pennsylvania Hall, containing his office, was sacked and burned by rioters. But much as his Haverhill fellow-citizens disliked his views on the negro question, they twice sent him to the Massachusetts Legislature, while, as for his poetic genius, the ardor of strife,

> "Making his rustic reed of song
> A weapon in the war with wrong,"

touched his lips with fire. He served Liberty as truly as did Milton, but at no such heavy cost. Inspired by generous anger, Whittier wrote as he had never written before. The *Voices of Freedom* sounded in

antislavery journals from 1833 to 1848. Many of the stirring lyrics are eloquence rather than poetry, the trumpet-calls of a sentinel

> "Watching on the hills of Faith,
> Listening what the spirit saith
> Of the dim-seen light afar,
> Growing like a nearing star."

The blood-red cloud through which that star had yet to break confused sadly the ideals of this stormy son of peace. After all, he was of the Friends, and might not resist evil, after the tragic fashion of John Brown, with violence. "It is not a Christian weapon," wrote the puzzled Quaker poet, after gazing on one of the pikes used in that desperate raid. Whittier had scathing rebuke for Webster and ringing praise for Barbara Frietchie, but he would not, though his heart was hot within him, sing the heroism of young Colonel Shaw, whom St. Gaudens has immortalized in bronze, lest his words "give a new impetus to the war." Gail Hamilton stitched her mischievous comment on his attitude into a pair of slippers, which he liked to show, with a humorous look, to his friends. On each slipper was embroidered a bristling American eagle, with blazing eyes, and claws full of thunderbolts, — all worked in peaceful drab.

When the bursting of the war-cloud set Whittier free from polemics, he found himself at leisure to write more fully than before along the pastoral and narrative lines native to his genius. Although he persisted to the end in turning the cold Quaker shoulder to art, avoid-

ing music and designating statues as "graven images," he learned to polish and enrich his poetry until in the later work there was little occasion to apologize for "the harshness of an untaught ear." At his best, he is an irresistible balladist, a delightful painter of the rustic scenery and village manners that he knew so well, and our most intimate interpreter of the religious life. The figures of his melodious tales are old-time Quakers persecuted for their witness, a young Puritan mother, a poor Indian deacon, hard-fortuned maidens like the witch's daughter and the Papist drudge, a plain man who did his duty, like Abraham Davenport, or a modest philanthropist, like Dr. Howe, — heroes not chosen from the gay ranks of chivalry and lists of fame, but from garret and prison and farm-house. The virtue dearest to Whittier was pity. The deeds he loved best to commemorate were deeds of mercy. In nature, too, he found, not that lonely majesty, that austere grandeur which Bryant knew, but unfailing cheer and comfort.

> "I lean my heart against the day
> To feel its bland caressing;
> I will not let it pass away
> Before it leaves its blessing."

Whittier was a true observer, in simple, farm-boy fashion. The day had not come when poets must be scientists, but the day had gone when a Connecticut bard could write of "Philomel high percht upon a thorn." The birds that sing through Whittier's vol-

ume are oriole and veery, "the crested bluejay," "the blackbird in the corn," the robins in the orchard, the night-thrush calling to prayer. Well-nigh perfect are his pictures of characteristic New England scenes, — the little school-house among the sumach and blackberry vines, the straggling riverside street of the "stranded village," the grass-grown burying-ground within its "winding wall of mossy stone,"

> "And the old swallow-haunted barns —
> Brown-gabled, long, and full of seams
> Through which the moted sunlight streams,
> And winds blow freshly in, to shake
> The red plumes of the roosted cocks,
> And the loose haymow's scented locks."

Yet, in a way, Whittier idealizes nature. "The Vanishers" are there. The "golden-tissued weather" is hushed with angel presences. "Sunset still is miracle." Everywhere is the hint of divine hope, the trace of divine love.

Whittier's religion was, indeed, the soul of his genius. His sternest denunciations of wrong sprang from his passion for goodness, and goodness, as the Quaker poet apprehended it, was love. Puritanism, reared on the Hebrew Scriptures, might emphasize the law, but the Inner Light witnessed to the Gospel.

> "Ye see the curse which overbroods
> A world of pain and loss;
> I hear our Lord's beatitudes
> And prayer upon the cross."

Pure of bigotry, he praised the life of love, the life of self-denial, wherever he beheld it, whether in a Channing, a Tauler, or a Chalkley Hall. The generosity of Whittier's elegies equals their tenderness. All disciples of Christ were of the poet's church.

"Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may thy service be? —
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following thee."

All problems that disquieted him, the fate of "the innumerable dead," the choice of evil, the loss of the beloved, he referred to the "star-crowned" angel, Hope. Wistfully as he dwelt on the footsteps of the Nazarene, he found Palestine in Massachusetts.

"The heavens are glassed in Merrimac, —
What more could Jordan render back?"

The later years of the poet's life were surrounded by the silence of deafness, but he dwelt simply and happily, among those who loved him, in his pleasant home at Amesbury, still giving forth ballads and nature lyrics, but singing most often and ever more sweetly

"The patience of immortal love
Outwearying mortal sin."

VI. **Ralph Waldo Emerson.** — So far our New England poets, dear though they are to us, stand by general consent below the second rank of song. Not only has America not known a Homer, a Dante, a Shakespeare, but the choir of contemporary Europe has outvoiced

her. Bryant is less than Wordsworth, Longfellow does not equal the greatest of his German models, Holmes' flashes of fun and feeling, the flame of Lowell, the hearthfire glow of Whittier, pale before the names of Goethe, Hugo, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning. In Emerson, however, we have, if not an acknowledged master, yet a poet whose lyricism is so strange and rare as to defy the critics. They can compare him to nobody, measure him by nothing, and are sometimes driven by sheer perplexity to pronounce him not a poet at all. They accuse him, justly enough, of abstract themes, irregular rhymes and rhythms, bewildering passages and unearthly ecstasies, a passion too "thin-piercing." Yet many readers find a unique and unwithering charm in his ethereal notes. It seems to such that here, as nowhere else in American poetry, may be felt the thrill of a spiritual secret, a whisper from beyond.

"Sometimes the airy synod bends,
And the mighty choir descends,
And the brains of men thenceforth,
In crowded and in still resorts,
Teem with unwonted thoughts.
* * * * * *
Beauty of a richer vein,
Graces of a subtler strain,
Unto men these moonmen lend,
And our shrinking sky extend."

The story of Emerson's life is bare of outward romance. He was born in Boston, "within a kitestring of the birthplace of Benjamin Franklin." The first

American Emerson had been a baker, but he fathered a line of preachers. One of these built the famous Old Manse of Concord, where he was living, a fearless young patriot, at the time of the British raid, and whence he went forth, never to return, for service as chaplain in the Revolutionary army. He had literary tastes, which reappeared in his son, the Rev. William Emerson, whom the opening of the century found established as pastor of the First Church in Boston, although his longing was for a church without a creed. "Five rosy boys" adorned the modest parsonage, but the father's premature death brought upon their youth privations and hardships, which, though gallantly borne, were too heavy for constitutions naturally frail. Edward and Charles, the "strong, star-bright companions" of Ralph Waldo's early years, gave promise hardly less brilliant than his own. It was a wonderful trio.

> "We had eaten fairy fruit,
> We were quick from head to foot,
> All the forms we looked on shone
> As with diamond dews thereon."

But both Edward and Charles died of consumption before reaching the age of thirty, leaving for the survivor a lasting shadow of loss upon the Concord meadows where the lads had kept their "Carnival of Time" together.

> "I touch this flower of silken leaf,
> Which once our childhood knew;
> Its soft leaves wound me with a grief
> Whose balsam never grew."

Each brother in turn taught school to help the next younger through college. The years at Harvard which William, the eldest and most careworn, thus made possible for Waldo were years in which Emerson's independence of thought had already begun to manifest itself. "He seemed," said an observer, "to dwell apart, as if in a tower, from which he looked upon everything from a loophole of his own." Graduated at eighteen, he made trial, for some dozen years, of the trodden ways of the world. He taught a little, preached a little, travelled a little, but the rituals and the rewards of other men were not for him. He withdrew from the ministry and settled at Concord, hoping to make a modest livelihood by writing and lecturing. "Steady, steady," he said. "I am convinced that if a man will be a true scholar, he shall have perfect freedom. . . . Society has no bribe for me; neither in politics, nor church, nor college, nor city. My resources are far from exhausted. If they will not hear me lecture, I shall have leisure for my book, which wants me. Besides, it is a universal maxim, worthy of all acceptation, that a man may have that allowance which he takes. Take your place and the attitude to which you see your unquestionable right, and all men acquiesce."

Of Emerson as Transcendental philosopher, proclaiming on scores of Lyceum platforms and publishing in successive volumes of essays a mystic idealism that made the elders doubt his sanity and the "nigh-starving" youth of New England hang with rapturous devo-

tion on his words, a later chapter treats. Emerson the poet had the same message to give, but gave it in music, — often a broken music, to be sure, but at its best as sweet and wild as the voices of the woodland which he loved. Weary of the "gray dreams" of books, his library was the sylvan country about Concord.

"Knowledge this man prizes best
Seems fantastic to the rest;
Pondering shadows, colors, clouds,
Grass-buds and caterpillar shrouds,
Boughs on which the wild bees settle,
Tints that spot the violet's petal,
Why Nature loves the number five,
And why the star-form she repeats:
Lover of all things alive,
Wonderer at all he meets,
Wonderer chiefly at himself,
Who can tell him what he is?
Or how meet in human elf
Coming and past eternities?"

How well Emerson knew the alphabet of Nature, her flowers, trees, and birds, poems such as *Each and All*, *The Rhodora*, *The Humble-Bee*, *The Titmouse*, *The Snow-Storm*, *April*, *May-Day*, bear witness; but the word which these fair letters fashioned for him was ever God. Over this wildwood rambler

"soared the eternal sky
Full of light and of deity."

Swiftly appropriating the scientific revelation of the century, he loved to trace in thought all that miraculous way from

"the ancient periods
Which the brooding soul surveys,
Or ever the wild Time coined itself
Into calendar months and days,"

on through the majestic æons, while

"the world was built in order
And the atoms march in tune."

Dwelling thus face to face and heart to heart with Nature, Emerson grew in gladness, serenity, and purity more akin to her than to the tragic race of men.

"Whoso walks in solitude
And inhabiteth the wood,
Choosing light, wave, rock, and bird,
Before the money-loving herd,
Into that forester shall pass,
From these companions, power and grace.
Clean shall he be, without, within,
From the old adhering sin."

Hardship, sorrow, and, at last, mental disease did their best to bend and break him to the mortal mood; but still he walked erect. He took his poverty blithely, even proudly.

"God fills the scrip and canister,
Sin piles the loaded board."

The deaths of his brothers, of the bride of his youth, and, above all, of his little Waldo, his "Morning Star," shook but could not shatter Emerson's noble joy in the gift of life. "Thou must mount for love," he had written. So he bore his wounds for healing to that large, pure ether where he breathed most naturally. "In the

actual world — the painful kingdom of time and place — dwell care and canker and fear. With thought, with the ideal, is immortal hilarity, the rose of joy; round it all the Muses sing; but grief cleaves to names and persons, and the partial interests of to-day and yesterday."

Not even the slow decay of his faculties marred the old man's gentle dignity, and the goal was met as tranquilly as the path had been pursued.

> "When frail Nature can no more,
> Then the Spirit strikes the hour:
> My servant Death, with solving rite,
> Pours finite into infinite."

> "Turn the key and bolt the door,
> Sweet is death forevermore."

Perhaps the prime value of Emerson's poetry for young readers is the elevation of spirit it imparts. His conception of the poet's art and mission, as set forth in the two parts of *Merlin*, in *Bacchus* and *Saadi*, may baffle unaccustomed students, who may also fail to apprehend the full thought-burden of *The Sphinx*, *The Problem*, *Uriel*, *Woodnotes*, *Monadnoc*, *Brahma*, the *Ode to Beauty*, the three-fold poem on *Love*. The autobiographical lyrics, especially the impassioned beauty of the *Threnody* and the pathetic sweetness of the *Dirge*, are more accessible, but after the nature poems and after such patriotic contributions to public festivals as the *Concord Hymn*, Emerson is most readily approached through such quatrains, chance lines and fragments as flash out upon

the individual seeker. He longed for a grander generation,

"men of mould,
Well embodied, well ensouled,"

yet even as we are Emerson thought nobly of humanity, for he had faith in the divine energy that enters

"Into all our human plight,
The soul's pilgrimage and flight;
In city or in solitude,
Step by step, lifts bad to good,
Without halting, without rest,
Lifting Better up to Best."

VII. **Other New England Poets.** — Although her patriarchs of song have fallen, New England is not yet without a minstrel. In THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH she possesses an

"Enamored architect of airy rhyme."

A native of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the delightful "Rivermouth" of Tom Bailey's Bad Boyhood, he became at sixteen clerk in a New York business house. A poet born, he soon broke away from the counting-room to take such successive chances as offered in proof-correction, manuscript-reading, and journalism. Taylor, Stoddard, and Stedman had gathered about them a little circle of enthusiasts, in whose happy atmosphere the lyric genius of Aldrich swiftly came to blossom. These Bohemian years were his poetic springtide, sweet with a delicate and tender music.

"A man should live in a garret aloof,
And have few friends, and go poorly clad,

With an old hat stopping the chink in the roof,
To keep the Goddess constant and glad.

* * * * * * *

Wretched enough was I sometimes,
Pinched, and harassed with vain desires;
But thicker than clover sprung the rhymes
As I dwelt like a sparrow among the spires."

Fame was not long in finding him. His youthful *Ballad of Babie Bell* made the public cry, which always pleases the public mightily, and in process of time his prose *Story of a Bad Boy* and *Marjorie Daw* made the public laugh, which answers quite as well. Lovers of poetry looked askance on his three so-called novels, idyllic tales of New England village life, *Prudence Palfrey*, *The Queen of Sheba*, *The Stillwater Tragedy*, for, pleasant reading though they are, they are not worth their cost in lyrics. Yet Aldrich has at no time abandoned his master-craft of "wondersmith," and volumes daintily entitled *Cloth of Gold*, *Flower and Thorn*, early placed him in the front rank of living American poets. In 1865 he became a resident of Boston, where for several years he edited *Every Saturday*, a would-be modern *Spectator*, that failed for lack of popular support. He afterwards succeeded Howells in the charge of the *Atlantic Monthly*, retiring after nine years of distinguished service to keep thenceforth an unbroken tryst with the Muses.

Aldrich's fancy haunts the far East. From youth he has loved to dream of clustered palms, sandalwood and

citron, rich bazaars, mandolin and dulcimer, gold and porphyry, "dusk Sultanas," and

> "the woes
> Of women shut in dim seraglios."

Yet however voluptuous the theme, such is the poet's New England purity that the exquisitely cut and polished verses are

> "Wine-red jewels that seem to hold
> Fire, but only burn with cold."

He is almost as mellifluous, almost as light of touch, almost as deft and rare and sparkling, as his chosen leader in lyricism, Robert Herrick, and without Herrick's offences. Both are at their best when at their briefest. Aldrich has essayed, with no slight measure of success, the minor epic and the poetic drama. His themes for the former are drawn from Judaic legend and Elizabethan romance, for the latter from Spanish story and saint-lore of the mediæval church. But it is his lyrics, his "cockle shells of rhyme," that bid fair to keep afloat the longest.

Aldrich is sometimes called artificial, a trifler in verse, a voice without a message. It is true that he has, what our elder New England poets too often lacked, the artistic conscience, suffering not a couplet to escape until it has been filed to the last refinement of phrase and harmony; true that he seems to hold the æsthetic attitude toward life, distilling from pain, loss, death, the ghastly and the horrible a honeydew of beauty; true that

he seldom thrills us with a high-resounding strain. The man of the world is much in evidence, with his fastidious taste and piquant turns of speech, his after-dinner flavor of wine and wit and surface cynicism. Loitering on the slopes of Parnassus, Aldrich has plucked the spicy laurels of society verse. All this puts him in line with the majority of our present painters, sculptors, architects, in whom the rigorous devotion to technique is more apparent than the control of great conception or idea. It marks him as the son of our latter New England, where Puritanism no longer traces

"a path
As bleached as moonlight, with the shadow of leaves
Stamped black upon it."

Born too late for the absolute faith of the forefathers, the raptures of the Transcendentalists, Aldrich has not found a crusade to sing. Yet the heroic note occasionally leaps forth. Memories of the war,

"The sorrowful, splendid Past,
With its glory and its woe,"

still strike from him the passionate lament, the cry of nobler longing.

The spiritual element missed in Aldrich forms the central value of the poetry of EDWARD ROWLAND SILL. Though born in Connecticut and a graduate of Yale, his career as professor of English Literature in the University of California has tended to associate his memory with the Pacific coast. His death was untimely, but

the imprint of that soul "serene and clear" remains upon the two little volumes which hold his collected poems. The high-thoughted *Venus of Milo* and sweet-hearted *Field Notes* have many lovers, while *The Fool's Prayer* is known throughout the land. His lyric titles are in themselves suggestive of the earnest tenor of his verse, — *Life*, *Faith*, *Opportunity*, *The Invisible*, *Peace*, *The Reformer*, *Service*. Columbia, too, has a poetic professor of New England origin in GEORGE E. WOODBERRY, whose editorial and editorial labors, admirably performed, leave him too little leisure for his art. His threnody, *The North Shore Watch*, has elevation and literary quality; *My Country* attests an enthusiastic patriotism; but his songs are lighter-winged than ode or elegy and, like the haunting cadences of his *Anecdotes of Siena*, predict a popular favor not yet won. THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS, a Dante student of renown, he whom a younger poet, Richard Hovey, styled our "hermit thrush of singers," has a golden quality of tone, few though his life-notes were. Any poet of English speech might well be glad to have written, —

> "There is a city builded by no hand
> And unapproachable by any shore,
> And unassailable by any band
> Of storming soldiery forevermore."

Precious, too, is the handful of sonnets bequeathed to those "who live in the spirit" by JONES VERY, the poet of the Transcendentalists. Although in him religious exhilaration may have passed at times the bounds of sanity,

Emerson honored "our brave saint," and, while louder voices are passing into silence, Very's mystic oracle still holds an "audience fit, though few." Our singer of the sea is CELIA THAXTER. From a lonely lighthouse on the Isles of Shoals she learned, in girlhood, to love foaming breaker and wheeling gull till it grew her vital need

> "To feel the wind, sea-scented, on the cheek,
> To catch the sound of dusky, flapping sail."

Essential charm of womanhood, frank, generous, passionate, clings to the poems of HELEN HUNT JACKSON. The daughter of an Amherst professor, she poured forth in song the heart-break and the healing of her widowed youth. The new interests of the new life that came to her beneath the majestic beauty of the Rockies are largely expressed in prose, — in her burning pleas for the Indian, *A Century of Dishonor* and *Ramona*. From another Amherst woman, EMILY DICKINSON, an elfish recluse in her father's house and garden, have been wafted to the world a few showers of sibylline leaves more curious than anything else in our minor poetry. In demure and dashing strokes her letters vividly paint that typical New England household, the father "pure and terrible," who "never played," the mother who did not "care for thought," but, as life went on, "achieved in sweetness what she lost in strength," the brother and sister, the pets and flowers, and Irish Maggie "warm and wild and mighty." Safely cloistered in this environment, the shy little poet loved no words so well as *gallant* and

Edgar A. Poe

*martial* and posed as roguish rebel against the traditional solemnities of Puritanism.

"A smile suffused Jehovah's face;
The cherubim withdrew;
Grave saints stole out to look at me,
And showed their dimples, too.

"I left the place with all my might, —
My prayer away I threw;
The quiet ages picked it up,
And Judgment twinkled, too."

"The air's as free for a fly as for an eagle," and there are still other musicians who have cheered the granite hills. The gracious melodies of Lucy Larcom, the pleasant balladry of Nora Perry, the tender, "hedge-row" songs of "Susan Coolidge," sweeten the wayside air. John G. Saxe, whose vogue as a humorist in rhyme once bade fair to rival that of Holmes, has had his day. In place of *The Proud Miss MacBride* we now laugh over the *Leetle Yawcob Strauss* of Charles Follen Adams. The invasion from green Erin has brought its minstrels with it. John Boyle O'Reilly and James Jeffrey Roche, patriots of two flags, have sent forth resonant strains, and Louise Imogen Guiney, whose father fell in the Union ranks, strikes her Keltic harp-strings with a fearless buoyancy and force.

VIII. **Edgar Allan Poe.** — Our poetic Pleiades had its fallen star. Far apart from the tranquil cluster of Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, Emerson, holding their shining courses in clear heavenly places,

rose from the depths of shadow what Swinburne has called "the short exquisite music, subtle and simple and sombre and sweet, of Edgar Poe."

He came of a proud Maryland family. His grandfather was a Revolutionary patriot, honored by Lafayette. There was doubtless fiery blood in the old general, who disowned his eldest son for taking to the stage and marrying a player. The rash young Southerner appears to have made an indifferent actor, but his wife sustained for three years an engagement as leading lady in the Federal Street Theatre of Boston. In the Puritan city, destined to be one of his pet aversions, the poet, their second child, was born. Two years later, he was an orphan and already an object of charity. Compassionate families of Richmond, where his poor mother had died, adopted Edgar and his baby sister, his elder brother being sent to the grandfather's home in Baltimore.

Under the roof of a rich tobacco-merchant, Mr. John Allan, Poe's childhood knew no want, unless it was the all-important want of wise control. His foster-parents were fond of the bright little lad, with his dark curls, sweet voice, and flashing looks. He had his pony and his dogs, his dancing-lessons, and, at dessert, his taste of wine. When the boy was six, the Allans went abroad, and for the next five years Edgar kept the terms in the Manor House School, near London, his sensitive nature retaining an indelible impression of all that made for beauty and mystery in his new surroundings. "My earliest recollections of a school life," he wrote in

*William Wilson*, "are connected with a large, rambling Elizabethan house, in a misty-looking village of England, where were a vast number of gigantic and gnarled trees, and where all the houses were excessively ancient. In truth, it was a dream-like and spirit-soothing place, that venerable old town. At this moment, in fancy, I feel the refreshing chilliness of its deeply-shadowed avenues, inhale the fragrance of its thousand shrubberies, and thrill anew with undefinable delight at the deep hollow note of the church-bell, breaking, each hour, with sullen and sudden roar, upon the stillness of the dusky atmosphere in which the fretted Gothic steeple lay imbedded, and asleep."

On his return to Richmond, Poe had grown to a slight, graceful, active youth, of imperious temper, with a store of dreamy, ideal passion which leapt into a white flame of adoration for the mother of one of his schoolmates.

"Lo! in yon brilliant window niche,
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!"

After a few months of gracious friendship, the lady died, and night after night, in autumn wind and rain, the boy of fifteen paid lingering visits to her grave, perhaps in those strange vigils giving his poetic genius its peculiar bent, for, ever after, the suggestion of a beautiful woman's untimely death thrilled the most impassioned chord of his being.

The story of Poe's manhood is brief and broken. A year at the University of Virginia ended with honors in Latin and French and with gambling debts to the amount of twenty-five hundred dollars. From the counting-room in which Mr. Allan then placed him, Poe broke away and enlisted, under a false name, in the United States regular army. That summer the young private, on duty at Fort Independence in Boston harbor, published anonymously *Tamerlane*, a booklet of ten poems. These are crude and feverish, with hints in measure and diction of Shelley, Moore, and even Wordsworth, but in their prevailing tone out-Byroning Byron, praising

> "The heirdom of a kingly mind
> And a proud spirit, which hath striven
> Triumphantly with human kind,"

and bewailing the fate of a passionate youth

> " in his own fire
> Wither'd and blasted."

His army record was creditable, and Mr. Allan, whose wife had meanwhile died, relented so far as to procure for him a cadetship in West Point. Poe was more interested in bringing out a revised edition of his poems, adding *Al Aaraaf*, a confusion of English echoes in which the Coleridge note is clear, and after a few months at the Military Academy, he grew restive and rebellious. Dismissed in disgrace, penniless, with Mr. Allan's favor lost beyond retrieve, Poe made his home in Baltimore with his father's widowed sister, Mrs. Clemm, marrying her daughter Virginia, a child of thirteen summers.

"It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me."

He entered now in earnest upon the struggle for a livelihood. The unique excellence of his prose tales, whose consideration belongs to a later chapter, gained him his first foothold. He found in Richmond an editorial opening, where he evinced high powers, largely thwarted by caprice, self-will, and his fatal inability to resist the wine-cup. He drifted from Richmond to New York, thence to Philadelphia and back again to New York. At thirty-four, he was widely known in America as an unequalled writer of short stories, a keen, sometimes venomous critic, and an editor as capable as he was irresponsible. At thirty-five *The Raven* suddenly brought him into popular cry as a poet. But for all his hard work, illustrious achievement, and established reputation, Poe continued wretchedly poor. The blame must be laid at his own door, although the odds of rearing and temperament were cruelly against him. He had become addicted to the use of opium as well as of liquor, his word could not be trusted, and his moods were often arrogant and bitter. Like the restless spirit of *Paradise Lost*, he roamed with sinister looks about the literary Eden of Boston and Cambridge, his jealous wrath especially directed against Longfellow, who with characteristic gentleness ascribed the severity of Poe's

criticisms to "the irritation of a sensitive nature chafed by some indefinite sense of wrong." Another of the "Frogpondians," Colonel Higginson, has written of Poe's appearance: "I distinctly recall his face, with its ample forehead, brilliant eyes, and narrowness of nose and chin, an essentially ideal face, not noble, yet anything but coarse; with the look of over-sensitiveness which when uncontrolled may prove more debasing than coarseness. It was a face to rivet one's attention in any crowd, yet a face that no one would feel safe in loving."

Poe seems, nevertheless, to have been tender with his young wife, although he was so little able to provide for her that, in her last illness, an appeal for charity was made in their behalf through the public press. He survived her but three years, — years of alternating glooms and frenzies, of criss-cross courtships, deeper dissipations, and fitful reforms. He died at forty in a Baltimore hospital from the effects of a debauch.

Poe's European fame, especially in France and Italy, outstrips that of every other American poet.

> "None sing so wildly well
> As the angel Israfel."

His artistic influence, transmitted through his French translator and enthusiastic disciple, Charles Baudelaire, a closely kindred spirit, is potent to-day in France and Belgium over the symbolists, while in England Swinburne is of his following. Yet Poe was the channel, not the fountain, of the new poetic current. It flowed

to him through Coleridge from the great romantic revival of a century ago. From the stress laid by romanticism on beauty and emotion sprang this new poetry, a passionate lyricism knowing no law but the beautiful. It admits no point of contact with science or with ethics. It merely strives to convey, by musical impression and dim, music-born images, a burden of feeling. Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* communicates a dreamy ecstasy, Poe's *Ulalume* his favorite mood of "remorseful passion for the irrecoverable dead." To inquire what these poems of liquid title-sound may mean is quite beyond the mark. They have little to do with meanings. Poe, who defined poetry as "the rhythmic creation of the beautiful," declared: "Music is the perfection of the soul or the idea of poetry; the vagueness of exaltation aroused by a sweet air (which should be indefinite and never too strongly suggestive) is precisely what we should aim at in poetry." In point of fact, however, the clear-cut precision of Poe's own mind made, as a rule, the intellectual bearings of his lyrics plain.

It should be added, in justice to a forgotten bard of Georgia, that Poe seems to have taken the hint for his characteristic manner, or, at least, borrowed many of his best effects, from Dr. Thomas Holley Chivers, in whose "snatches of sweet unsustained song," Poe confessed to finding "an indefinite charm of sentiment and melody." The themes of death and despair, the sad and resonant refrains, as "nevermore," mellifluous names suggestive of some unearthly grace, as "Israfel" and "Isadore"—

this last becoming with Poe "Lenore," subtly interwoven rhythms, sonorous rhymes that beat and beat again upon the ear, the repetitions and parallelisms born of excited feeling, are lyrical devices all to be found in Chivers before they appeared in Poe, but the hand that feebly tuned the strings yielded place to a hand that swept them with the master-touch.

IX. **Other Southern Poets.** — The poetry of the South, of the

> "land of balm and bloom,
> Blandest airs and sweet perfume,
> Where the jasmine's golden stars
> Glimmer soft through emerald bars,
> And the fragrant orange flowers
> Fall to earth in silver showers,"

shows as a whole the tendency, preëminent in Poe, to accentuate the elements of music and emotion. The silvery cadences of Father Ryan, rendering mournful homage to *The Conquered Banner*, or attuned to Mass and altar bell, are so dulcet as to cloy. The Lost Cause had no lack of laureates, the bugles of the Gray answering note for note the bugles of the Blue. The war-poems of Mrs. Preston, northern-born, the adopted daughter of Virginia, are antiphonal with the war-poems of Mrs. Dorr, southern-born, the adopted daughter of Vermont. But even apart from the passion of strife, the poetic impulse of the South has consistently shown itself lyrical, save in so far as the dramatic sketches and narrative poems of Hayne constitute an exception. The ante-bellum bards, Edward Coate Pinkney of Mary-

land, Richard Henry Wilde of Georgia, Philip Pendleton Cooke of Virginia, belong to the blithe fellowship of troubadours, and the latest voice from the Old Dominion, that crisp-syllabled voice of Father Tabb, is loyal to lyric tradition.

But so sad have been the fortunes of the South that her poetic genius has found as yet only an imperfect utterance. The storm of the Rebellion, with the winter of want and woe that followed, stifled many a bird-note. It was fitting that a southern-born poet, Christopher Pearse Cranch, whom Virginia yielded up to Cambridge and to Transcendentalism, should word a lament for *Broken Wings*.

> "Ah yes, due fame for all who have achieved;
> And yet a thought for those who died too young —
> Their green fruit dropped — their visions half conceived —
> Their lays unsung!"

Men whom the battle spared had still to stand "grim encounters with starvation." Upon the three chief poets of the South, since Poe, the sorrows of the ruined Confederacy pressed with crushing force. PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE, a gentleman of South Carolina, his house burned in the bombardment of Charleston, his library scattered, his store of family silver lost, started life anew, with enfeebled health, in a shanty among the Georgia pines. Overcoming a thousand obstacles, the faithful poet "beat his music out," but apart from the trumpet tone of his war-songs, it was a music in the minor key. Nature, home-loves, and his art consoled him

for many losses. HENRY TIMROD, like Hayne a native of Charleston, was, like Hayne, in his early prime when "the blood-red flower of war" poisoned his hopes. His business and belongings vanished in the burning of Columbia, as Sherman marched to the sea, and the fugitive lyrist, with his wife and sister, knew the extremities of anxiety, toil, and need. His health gave way, and he died at thirty-seven. His thin volume has many lovers; for if his muse is in less degree than Hayne's

> "A serious angel, with entrancëd eyes
> Looking to far-off and celestial things,"

she has a rosier flush of human beauty.

SIDNEY LANIER, bravest of the brave trio, had such force of genius and of will as to turn his tragedy into triumph. A Georgian by birth, he was a youth of nineteen, fresh from his college course, when, at the first call, he sprang to arms. Cheering his comrades by his magical flute-playing, he fought gayly on, through the darkening years, until, almost at the end, the fortunes of war flung him into Point Lookout prison. Tabb tasted with him those sorry hospitalities. When Lanier, foot-sore, exhausted, with fatal disease fastened upon his lungs, but with his precious flute tucked up the shabby gray sleeve, came home again, he had more need than ever of his soldier's courage. He taught, served as hotel clerk, and tempted fortune, which resisted the temptation, with a transcript of his young experiences, *Tiger Lilies*. This boyish

Sidney Lanier

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romance shows, like Longfellow's *Hyperion*, the close influence of Richter. Disordered as it appears, it is full of all that went to the poetic making of Lanier, — the woods, the war, music, and love. A blissful marriage and the joy of children helped him endure the law, which he studied and practised with his father, striving for several years to effect some compromise between that and his art. But the certainty, sealed by the ever-recurring cough and hemorrhage, that his time was short, nerved him to the resolve to live, while live he could, in the service of music and of poetry. An engagement as first flute for the Peabody symphony concerts in Baltimore, the editing of old hero-tales, lectures, magazine sketches and poems, kept the pot on the hearth boiling and the fire on the altar burning until, at last, two years before his death, Lanier was called to a lectureship on English literature at Johns Hopkins. His daring studies in the *Science of English Verse* and the *English Novel* attest his rare fitness for this prize, hard-won and soon-relinquished. He died of consumption at the age of thirty-nine.

Lanier's theory of verse is in accord with Poe's. Beauty and music are poetry's all in all.

> "Music is Love in search of a word,"

and lyricism is hardly more articulate. But Lanier longed for the completest intellectual equipment for his work. Poe, he said, "did not know enough." The Baltimore flute-player was a born musician, walking in

an enveloping cloud of harmonies, having only to turn aside from the noises of the world and listen to become aware of an unceasing "holy song." He purposed the creation of great symphonies written in a new musical notation as eagerly as he planned for the creation of great poems framed in accordance with new laws of verse. What with his intricate endeavor to bring his two arts into close technical relation, and his thirst to compass all knowledge and acquire all skill, he put away the day of actual performance even farther than the struggle for bread had already thrust it. The most liberal span of life would have been too short for Sidney Lanier, and the life that he wrested from disease and death was but a splendid fragment. Yet his poems as they stand, in their swift surprises of beauty, their secrets of sweet sound, their "Faith that smiles immortally," rank close upon the best achievements of American song. *The Hymns of the Marshes*, *The Symphony*, *The Revenge of Hamish*, *The Stirrup-Cup*, *Resurrection*, *My Springs*, *A Ballad of Trees and the Master*, are worthy even of their poet's hope.

X. **Poetry of the Middle States.** — The poetic product of the Middle States is as heterogeneous as their original elements of population. The picturesque figures of FITZ-GREENE HALLECK and JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE lead the line of Knickerbocker minstrels. The former is remembered for his spirited *Marco Bozzaris*, the latter for his blithe impromptu of *The Culprit Fay*, a fanciful attempt to domesticate the fairies in the high-

lands of the Hudson, and his enthusiastic address to *The American Flag*. But their friendship, which dates from 1813, when Halleck, a New Englander of twenty-three, was seeking his fortune by way of a New York business house, and Drake, five years his junior, a native of the metropolis, had just entered upon the study of the law, was a poem in itself. It began on a September afternoon, when, on a trip down the harbor, Halleck remarked, as they watched the skies clearing after a shower, that it would be heaven to "lounge upon the rainbow and read Tom Campbell," and Drake's impulsive affection leapt forth to greet a kindred spirit. It ended, in its visible aspect, on another September afternoon, seven years later, when Halleck, returning from Drake's burial, said: "There will be less sunshine for me hereafter, now that Joe is gone." Less poetry there certainly was. During their seven years of fellowship, they had written together the *Croaker Papers*, light-hearted skits on local celebrities of the day, and Halleck, stimulated by Drake's more ardent inspiration, had done his best work, slight as that best now seems to be, in satire and lyric. His elegiac tribute to Drake, touching for its manly simplicity and sincerity, reached his own high-water mark of poetry.

> "Green be the turf above thee,
> Friend of my better days!
> None knew thee but to love thee,
> None named thee but to praise."

Halleck lived on for nearly half a century, a personage

in New York life, with which he became thoroughly identified. Enjoying a snug business berth in the counting-room of John Jacob Astor and the highest consideration among men of letters, he developed into — a delightful dinner-guest. His robust, almost military nature, with its spice of irony, may have felt out of sympathy with the austere genius of Bryant, on the one hand, and the sentimentality of Willis, on the other. The poetic influence of Willis was great in the thirties and earlier forties, and the *New York Mirror*, edited by him in conjunction with Morris, fostered a fashionable taste for the third-rate English poets Moore and Hood, Leigh Hunt and Mrs. Hemans.

Bryant was too cold and Poe too egotistic for the forming of literary coteries, but in the later forties, a decade before the *Atlantic Monthly* had begun to bind the Boston writers together, New York, too, could show a group of poets. The nucleus here was another youthful friendship. BAYARD TAYLOR, a journalist from a Quaker farm in Pennsylvania, and RICHARD HENRY STODDARD, son of a Massachusetts sea-captain, and himself a laborer in an iron foundry, dreamed the poet's dream together

> "in midnight streets
> And haunted attics flattered by the chime
> Of silver words."

Campbell's spell had snapped. Keats and Shelley were the new-arisen stars. Stoddard claimed spiritual kinship with the former, Taylor with the latter, and each

proceeded to echo the music of his chosen master-singer. Shortly GEORGE HENRY BOKER, the son of an old and wealthy Philadelphia family, was admitted as mate of their "poetic spring." Surely this was a democratic brotherhood, such as the spirit of song and the spirit of liberty best love. The poor artisan looked with generous admiration upon his dashing comrades. "I have seen many poets in my time," he wrote long after, "but none that fulfilled my ideal like the young Taylor and the young Boker, who were handsome, manly fellows, with mobile faces, alert eyes, and crowns of the clustering ringlets that made the head of Byron so beautiful." In the outcome, not one of that happy "trinity," as they were dubbed by a contemporary magazine, has altogether failed nor altogether succeeded. Taylor, the most ambitious of the three, swung through his showy career with a daring energy that pitched "his tent on many a distant field." In the service of New York newspapers, mainly *The Tribune*, he became the pilgrim of the globe, tramping through Europe, roughing it in California with the Forty-niners, smoking his Persian pipe in cross-legged ease on a Damascus roof, sporting with a leopard chained to a fig tree in fiery Ethiopia, riding a royal elephant through Lucknow, looking in on Hong Kong and the Loo-Choo Islands, shivering in Lapland, — a man

> "Whose Arab face was tanned
> By tropic sun and boreal frost;
> So travelled there was scarce a land
> Or people left him to exhaust."

So great was the hold taken by his journeys on the American imagination that fame and fortune flowed to his feet. But the master of "towered Cedar-croft" was still the terrible toiler. In addition to his travels, his studies, his newspaper "copy," and his popular lectures, for which there was a prodigious demand, he published, in his working-tide of some thirty-five years, more than as many volumes. The list includes twelve entertaining books of travel, four indifferent novels of New York and Pennsylvania life, an admirable translation of Goethe's *Faust*, and twelve volumes of original poems. Of all this poetry a few lyrics, as *Autumnal Dreams*, with its melodious yearning, the *Song of the Camp*, with its fortunate conclusion, *The Quaker Widow*, with its picture of quaint simplicity, and the wildfire rush of the *Bedouin Song*, take strong hold on immortality, but the epics and dramas which were to have been the crowning achievement of his prime came but heavily from the weary, over-worked pen. With all its charm, his Norwegian idyl, *Lars*, lags far behind its inevitable rival, *Evangeline*.

Taylor died at fifty-three, in Germany, at the outset of his public service as United States Minister to the Court of Berlin. The body was brought home for burial, and Boker and Stoddard, meeting then to meet no more, rode together in the long procession that attended the world-wanderer on his last journey. Boker had given his young manhood to the study of Elizabethan poetry and to the writing of dramas and sonnets, too

closely modelled after Shakespeare and his fellows, but so spirited, so pliant, and so strong as to deserve more attention than they have ever received. Some of these dramas, whose themes are Spanish, English, and Italian, were acted in London as well as here, but the stage conditions were disheartening. "Theatricals are in a fine state in this country," the young dramatist said bitterly. "Every inducement is offered to me to burn my plays as fast as I write them." The war turned Boker's talents into a new channel. The important service which he rendered in the organization and conduct of the Union League of Philadelphia was emphasized by his martial lyrics, best represented by the familiar *Dirge for a Soldier*. When peace was restored, this distinguished and patriotic citizen, who maintained with care his social position in Philadelphia's inmost circle, was naturally singled out for public honors. He was sent as United States Minister to Russia, where he evinced diplomatic ability of a high order. It is an honorable record, and yet when Barrett, a quarter of a century after Boker's plays had been mangled in our earlier theatres, staged one of them, *Francesca da Rimini*, with eminent success, Boker wrote sadly of the difference such recognition might have made in his life-work, had it come when the poetic purpose of his youth was still untamed.

Stoddard, who survives his youthful comrades, has had no such stirring experiences, yet not the most brilliant career could be more creditable than his. Passing

by patient steps from the foundry to the custom-house, the dock department, the public library, he arrived at journalism, and has long been installed as literary editor of the New York *Mail and Express*. Happily married to a lady of kindred gifts, he has unswervingly cultivated the art more precious than riches or applause. Although the lingering glow of Keats and of Tennyson, whom the young workman loved, may be discerned here and there, as in the graceful minstrelsy of *The King's Bell*, and the liquid measures of the *Hymn to the Beautiful*, Stoddard's verse has taken on more and more a frank, half-homely quality, suggestive of the plain American manhood it embodies. How truly this manhood, for all its quiet self-control, thrills with the poet's passion, is proved by such a noble lyric as *Adsum*. Yet the white-haired minstrel, whom New York delights to honor, does not forget, in his "golden flush of sunset," the fearless flame of dawn. In his own far-echoing lines,

> "There are gains for all our losses,
> There are balms for all our pain;
> But when youth, the dream, departs,
> It takes something from our hearts,
> And it never comes again."

The three young poets had drawn others to them. Thomas Buchanan Read, the landscape painter, whose contribution to poetry is not confined to *Sheridan's Ride* and *Drifting*, had been born in Taylor's county and celebrated his exploits with brush and pen. Still another

Pennsylvanian, Charles Godfrey Leland, a diffusive genius, ranging from metaphysics to music, and from industrial arts to gypsy lore, found a magnet in Boker, for whom he had conceived a boyish admiration when they were both undergraduates at Princeton. It was not until the middle fifties, however, that the first of Leland's humorous ballads in the German-American dialect gained him the sobriquet of "Hans Breitmann." In the fifties, too, Aldrich came into the group, to learn from Taylor the longing for the East, and EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN joined that goodly fellowship. His promise was bright, but

> "lovi[illegible] Beauty, and, by chance,
> Too poo[illegible] make her all in all,"

on his way to Parnassus he turned aside into Wall Street for a few golden years and, losing his way there, tarried over-long. To be America's most illustrious living critic is worth while only for a man who could be nothing better. Yet the impetuous sweep of his war-songs, his *Kearney at Seven Pines*, *Gettysburg*, *Wanted — A Man*, the playful grace of such a lyric [illegible] *Amour* or such a strain of native balladry as *The Doorstep*, the deeper, calmer force of *The Undiscovered Country* and *Liberty Enlightening the World*, put us too far in Stedman's debt for complaining. *Scribner's Magazine*, established in 1870, under the charge of Dr. J. G. Holland, whose pleasant stories and rhymed romances were once much in vogue, was seconded a decade later by *The Century*. These magazines, with the *Harper's*, have made rallying-

points for the New York poets, though in no exclusive or inevitable sense. Through their attractive pages many a modest lyrist, as Helen Gray Cone, with her valorous sallies of song, and Sophie Jewett, with her firm and delicate art, her tenderness and spiritual vision, have been brought before the public. The present editor of *The Century*, RICHARD WATSON GILDER, a troubadour of purest strain, is to-day the poetic chief of the city. But apparently no New Yorker can live for poetry alone. Gilder's generous interest in tenement house reform is only one phase of the metropolitan care for public concerns. The great seaport is indomitable with its din of modern life. It crushes Arcady beneath the globe. As Stedman sang for Cuba and Crete, the Stock Exchange and the Greeley Monument, so to open one of Gilder's later volumes is to learn what passing player or musician has just stirred the city's pulse, and what loss of bard or warrior this hemisphere or the other is lamenting. Among the poet-deaths this sensitive plate has pictured is that of Emma Lazarus, whose sacred Hebrew fire was quenched too soon.

"The silence where a bird hath ceased to sing"

is the memorial of H. C. Bunner, the blithe-toned editor of *Puck*, but the new society verse, whose art he had filched from the English Dobson, may be had in the bazaar of Clinton Scollard, with whom, too, another influence, the unexhausted Orient spell of Taylor, is yet potent.

It is a far cry from all this sweet, dainty, and somewhat

irresolute music of Manhattan's present-day singers to the "barbaric yawp" of WALT WHITMAN, a looming, rugged figure still on trial before the court of critics. In 1855 there broke upon the world a sound that impressed most hearers as a bestial bellow.

"Of physiology from top to toe I sing,"

chanted this Apollo in shirt sleeves, and forthwith proceeded so to do. The American public, so far as it heeded him at all, was affronted, and with right good reason. Hitherto its poets, Harvard professors, Concord sages, graceful Southerners, polished Philadelphians and New Yorkers, had written like the pure-hearted, cultivated gentlemen they were, cherishing those chivalries and holy privacies which are the slowly ripened fruit of civilization. Even Poe, our imp of the perverse, threw only white and tremulous lights about the name of love. An official attempt was made to suppress *Leaves of Grass* as indecent, but Walt Whitman was not to be suppressed.

"Bearded, sunburnt, gray-neck'd, forbidding, I have arrived."

Emerson and Thoreau were the foremost of his welcomers, rejoicing in the man's freshness and courage, although protesting against the offensive element in his early work, — a taint from which the bulk of his poetry is free. It turned out, on inquiry, that this "natural and nonchalant person" was of Long Island birth and farmer ancestry, a man of meagre schooling, who had knocked about the world in a free-and-easy way, roaming through the West and South, lingering in the great cities, trying

his hand at teaching, gardening, printing, journalism, and carpentry, and making up his mind to be a poet.

> "I, now thirty-seven years old, in perfect health, begin,
> Hoping to cease not till death."

His hope won fulfilment. Although that rich vitality was so impaired by his arduous service as war-nurse that the last twenty years of his life were those of a paralytic, his tide of song rolled steadily on to the end. It had gained high favor meanwhile with certain poetic connoisseurs in Europe and America, but has still to win, if win it can, the ear of the people, whose peculiar poet Whitman claimed to be.

The first impression given by his book is that of coarse and monstrous egotism, often grotesque in expression.

> "I dote on myself, there is that lot of me and all so luscious."

On closer scrutiny, it comes to light that Whitman's blatant "myself" is to be interpreted as "the sign of democracy," that an egotism commensurate with his own is enjoined upon us one and all.

> "I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
> And what I assume you shall assume,
> For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you."

Even so, the beauty of braggadocio, as against the beauty of modesty, is yet to be made apparent. It develops further, that the corrective for this complacent self-love lies in the love of comrades.

> "I will sing the evangel-poem of comrades and of love."

There is something appropriate in this, — in the promise of a mighty song of comradeship to peal forth from the great Babel, where hitherto the flame of poetry had been able to live only as friendship shielded it, as Drake and Halleck, or Taylor, Stoddard, and Boker bent over it together. Walt Whitman's chosen comrades, however, were not fellow-poets, but boat-men, stage-drivers, and artisans.

"The young mechanic is closest to me — he knows me pretty well."

Yet Whitman sometimes forsook his favorite loafing-places of wharf and ferry to meet the literary Bohemians of New York at Pfaff's beer cellar, where the keen old Halleck is said to have remarked, "Walt ought to write his poems seated on the back of an elephant."

Whitman's war experiences brought out the best of him. In *Drum-Taps* there are to be found gleams of pure imagination, throbs of sonorous music, and a tone of noble passion, culminating ("O liquid and free and tender!") in the marvellous Lincoln elegy, with its triumphal chant to "sane and sacred death." But this is his climax. He praised, like a lusty vagabond, the joys of sheer sensation, he felt, and to some degree communicates, the emotions awakened by the infinite picture-book of nature and of human life, but in his own admission, "the physical and the sensuous" had too strong hold upon him to admit of his interpreting the tragic forces of ethical law, or revealing the face of spiritual beauty. Apart from the war, his attitude

toward life is as cheerfully irresponsible as his attitude toward art. His long, unrhymed lines, sometimes loose and awkward, sometimes falling into measures of natural grace and power, suggest the careless postures, now majestic, now a sprawl, of the grand old gypsy himself. But he loved the big show of America, he had faith in the wholesomeness of common life and common folk, he filled his day-dreams with the trooping figures of our industrial pageant, he gloried in our basal idea of human brotherhood, his lower mood was crossed, more and more, by waves of divine yearning, and he has left a phenomenal record, not only of the aspect of a particular epoch in democratic evolution, but of the impression made by this strange, changeful world, this mortal panorama, on a mind reckless of traditions and conventions. If, as Longfellow makes an enterprising publisher say in *Kavanagh*, "we want a national literature altogether shaggy and unshorn, that shall shake the earth like a herd of buffaloes thundering over the prairies," we come near getting it in Walt Whitman.

XI. **The Poetry of the West** began in the Ohio valley. Two sisters, ALICE and PHŒBE CARY, born near Cincinnati in the early twenties, the elder strong of will and warm of heart, the younger with a shyer and more saucy vein, were reared in a typical little brown house, with cherry-branches brushing the roof and a sweet-briar climbing to the eaves. In girlhood they turned to verse-making, much like the Goodale sisters in the Berkshires a generation later; in womanhood they removed to

New York, where they won fame and friends in such degree that their Sunday evening receptions became one of the features of the city. Both carolled as simply as the birds that gladdened their sweet-briar, but the verse of the younger has the keener edge. Another poetic partnership is that of MR. and MRS. PIATT, the husband a native of Indiana, the wife of Kentucky. Mrs. Piatt, more artistic than the Cary sisters, has not their secret of touching the popular heart, although her poems for children have the genuine mother-note. John J. Piatt first came before the public with a little volume entitled *Poems of Two Friends*. His companion in the venture was Howells, who soon deserted poetry for the more profitable art of fiction. Piatt, on the other hand, developed into a clear-toned singer, proud to commemorate the heroic days of the prairie-land, when the cloud-built cities of the sunset fronted the log-cabin in the clearing, with their

> "gorgeous prophecy
> Lighting the doorway of the pioneer."

WILL CARLETON, of Michigan birth, also rhymes the struggles of the first settlers, recognizing with manly tenderness the woman's share of the burden, but his frank, effective verse is chiefly occupied with the plain life of the plain present. His poetic form is a rude sort of dramatic monologue. It is the heart-sore old farmer himself who tells, in his honest fashion, how *Betsey and I are out*. We listen to the forlorn old mother on her way *Over the Hill to the Poor-House*. In Carleton's

ballads we find the crude new West of county fair and singing-school. The tragedies are of farm-work, mortgage, and foreclosure. The actors, though they "never swallowed a grammar," are brave, kindly, and pious, with an unfailing sense of fun to help their hard lives through. JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, born in Indiana and successively a sign-painter, strolling actor, journalist, and public reader, writes in the Hoosier dialect of *The Old Swimmin'-Hole*, *How John quit the Farm*, and like homely themes. He is a sympathetic singer of childhood, although he falls short here of EUGENE FIELD. This sweet-souled lyrist, a native of St. Louis and in his later life a resident of Chicago, left in the ten volumes of his collected works nothing so dear to West and East as the simple stanzas of *Little Boy Blue*. EDITH THOMAS of Ohio and MAURICE THOMPSON of Indiana are preeminently poets of nature. Well versed in books, and often caged in cities, they are nevertheless natural tenants of wood and field.

> "He is a poet strong and true
> Who loves wild thyme and honey-dew;
>
> And like a brown bee works and sings
> With morning freshness on his wings,
>
> And a golden burden on his thighs, —
> The pollen-dust of centuries!"

There is action in Thompson's lyrics. The white heron is brought down by the arrow, the bass is landed at last, we do not forget that this fair-weather loiterer has been a man of war. His most listless postures have sinewy

suggestions. But the poems of Edith Thomas are bathed in dream. She has "slept on the mountain of song." Long-lost Elizabethan cadences are blown over the rippling wheat and poppies into her Arcadian verse, for

"The god of music dwelleth out of doors."

JOHN HAY of Indiana, our present Ambassador to England, has known more of camps and courts than of sylvan solitudes. Admitted to the Illinois bar, he won Lincoln's friendship, and followed him to the White House in the capacity of private secretary. Hay relinquished this task, after a little, for service in the field, but was presently recalled to the President as aide-de-camp. Those years of close intercourse bore fruit, more than twenty years after the assassination, in the great biography of Lincoln issued by the two secretaries, Hay and Nicolay. In the meanwhile, Hay was pursuing a diplomatic career which has left its traces on his poems. Paris he knew, Vienna and Madrid; but, most of all, the daily companion of Lincoln learned to know manliness. "What we call vulgar society," said Emerson, "is that society whose poetry is not yet written." Of nobler strain, even, than Hay's *Triumph of Order*, more truly pathetic than *A Woman's Love*, are his *Pike County Ballads*, showing us heroes in Banty Tim, Old Ben the stage-driver, and Jim Bludso, the Mississippi engineer, whose "cussedness" saved every life but his own on board the "Prairie Belle."

"He weren't no saint, — but at jedgment
I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That wouldn't shook hands with him.

He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing —
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a-going to be too hard
On a man that died for men."

The rougher West depicted in the *Pike County Ballads* was brought with a rush into our literature by FRANCIS BRET HARTE, to whom it fell to witness and portray the wild life of the California gold-diggers. It was a feverish, wicked, dauntless moment of time, and Bret Harte, a New York stripling plunging into all adventures that offered, caught it in its splendid lights and sable shadows. He found his fame with the true California suddenness, as if he had picked up a nugget or "struck it rich." His first mining story, *The Luck of Roaring Camp*, could hardly get into the respectable pages of San Francisco's brand-new magazine, the *Overland*, of which Bret Harte himself was editor. Printer, proof-reader, and publisher joined in protest.. Once in type, it brought the East, in shape of the *Atlantic Monthly*, to sit at his feet and ask for more. *The Outcasts of Poker Flat* only whetted the appetite for desperado romance, while *The Heathen Chinee* and *Truthful James* convinced England that the long-looked-for American poet had appeared at last. If Bret Harte has not fulfilled expectation, he has at least faithfully rung the changes on his original themes

and has added to his red-shirt poetry a group of stirring war-songs.

The experience of JOAQUIN MILLER, a native of Indiana, tallies with that of Bret Harte in the two respects of an adventurous youth in cañons and gold-fields, and an exaggerated English estimate of his genius; but the "Poet of the Sierras" is no realist. Instead of phonographing the slang of mining-camps, he gives voice to that spirit of Spanish and Mexican romance which haunts the Sun-lands. Though lauded by London for originality, no American poet of equal rank is so barefaced as he in theft of literary styles. He is a careless craftsman, too, — a rough rider both in the headlong gallop of his Byronesque cantos and the swinging and wheeling manœuvres of his Swinburnian lyrics; but he has dash and color, abandon to nature and adoration of beauty.

So from earnest North and wistful South, cities and wheatlands, and, at last, from the rich Pacific slope, a music rises, the prelude of America's new song among the nations:

> "The poets come who cannot fail;
> Happy are they who sing thy perfect days!"

# CHAPTER V

## NATIONAL ERA: PROSE THOUGHT

"The true sovereigns of a country are those who determine its mind, its mode of thinking, its tastes, its principles." — WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, *Remarks on National Literature.*

I. **Criticism of Life.** — What is known as NEW ENGLAND TRANSCENDENTALISM represents our first American period of criticism of life. For upwards of two centuries cavalier conventions had held sway in the South; almost as long the North had been bound by Puritan tradition. The Revolution, our happy heresy in politics, had been followed by signs of social and religious revolt, but public attention was generally absorbed by the new experiment of an American republic, and not until 1830 or thereabouts were the times ripe, even in the long-settled East, for a speculative outlook on life. Unitarianism had disarranged the old formulas of faith. Rev. Jonathan Mayhew of Boston, an eloquent patriot who died ten years before the pealing of the Liberty Bell, was the Unitarian pioneer in New England. Some twenty years after his death, King's Chapel put forth a liturgy, drawn up by Rev. James Freeman, from which all Trinitarian expressions were omitted. The long-muttering storm crashed upon New England early in the present century. The Trinitarians, led by Professor Woods and Professor Stuart

of Andover, and by the redoubtable Lyman Beecher, fought strongly for the faith of the fathers, but the Unitarians, for a generation, steadily gained ground, especially in the neighborhood of Boston and of Harvard College. A reason for this may be found in the human longing for freedom. The old theology, considered here quite apart from the truth of its teachings, had held thought too rigidly within certain prescribed limits. Unitarianism cast aside fear and formalism. It bade men be glad, virtuous, and loving. It stood for frank inquiry, for culture, morality, and for a spirit of human sympathy that led at once to the agitation of social reforms. Its most eminent figure was WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, as benign, serene, and sensitive a soul as ever led revolt, a poetic dreamer before whose eyes had passed the vision of Divine Beauty, and a pulpit orator who spoke "with the animation and elevation of one who hears the great theme." Transcendentalism quickly caught at his watchwords. "Rise up and be a man," rang the voice of Emerson, "cast off those cumbrous things of old, let conscience be your lawgiver, reason your oracle, nature your temple, holiness your high priest, and a divine life your offering." But Channing's disciples soon outran the master. Unitarianism, at first so bold a departure, became in turn a centre of conservatism. THEODORE PARKER, that "Orson of divines," led off a radical church of his own. "To this day," writes Colonel Higginson, "I sometimes dream of going to hear him preach, — the great, free, eager congregation; the strong, serious, commanding presence

of the preacher; his reverent and earnest prayer; his comprehensive hour-long sermon full of sense, knowledge, feeling, courage, he being not afraid even of his own learning, absolutely holding his audience in the hollow of his hand."

With all these heresies in the air, even the strongholds of orthodoxy showed rifts and apertures through which new light from overseas came flooding in. The lofty idealism of Germany, that "transfigured Protestantism of the land of Luther," represented in England by Coleridge and Wordsworth and, for a time, by Carlyle, found New England ready. All that was needed was an interpreter, and that interpreter appeared in RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

The "spiritual-looking boy in blue nankeen," who impressed at least one companion at the Latin School as "angelic" in aspect, was even then a reader of Plato. During his freshman year at Harvard he took delight in the ethereal visions of Spenser's *Faery Queene*. "What we do not call education," Emerson wrote, "is more gracious than what we do call so," and he slighted his college mathematics for long hours with the poets and for solitary strolls. Yet for several years his outer life, decorous, unobtrusive, shy, gave little hint of the significant processes of thought that were going on within. While he was teaching in the schoolroom "the safe and cold details" of languages and sciences, he was writing out, every night, in his chamber, his "first thoughts on morals and the beautiful laws of compensation and of

individual genius." As a preacher, he began to win attention, yet the charm of his presence, that rare sweetness of face and resonance of voice, the illustrations drawn from wood and meadow, and the simplicity and naturalness of his style, interested his audiences more than the philosophical novelties so gently brought to bear upon them.

Emerson's career as a settled pastor covered little more than three years. Having studied divinity under the Unitarian influences of Harvard, he was naturally a follower of Channing and was ordained, in the spring of 1829, as colleague with another of the Unitarian pioneers, the Rev. Henry Ware, over Cotton Mather's own church, the Old North of Boston. The young pastor's growing reluctance to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which seemed to him the binding of religion to a form, led to his resignation in the fall of 1833. During this brief pastorate, the wife of his youth, shadowed from the first by consumption, had died. His own health now threatening to give way, Emerson sought relief in a long winter voyage to Sicily, whence he slowly journeyed northward through Italy and westward to Paris and London. But grief for his lost Ellen haunted him in Naples as in Roxbury, and his vivid Americanism, yearning toward the freshness of the future, earth's marvels yet in store, put him curiously out of sympathy with the picturesque ruins of the past, "poor, gray, shabby" places, of which he "soon had enough." Pictures, statues, even cathedrals, found him cold to their beauty.

"How few materials are yet used by our arts! The mass of creatures and of qualities are still hid and expectant." By no means a model tourist, what he liked best on the Continent was Landor, and in the British Isles Carlyle. The happy impression made by his visit to Carlyle was never, in either mind, effaced. The fierce prophet and tranquil poet were friends till death. "That man," said Carlyle, "came to see me, I don't know what brought him, and we kept him one night, and then he left us. I saw him go up the hill; I didn't go with him to see him descend. I preferred to watch him mount and vanish like an angel." And poor Mrs. Carlyle never forgot "the Visitor, who years ago in the Desert descended on us, out of the clouds as it were, and made one day there look like enchantment for us, and left me weeping that it was only *one* day."

On his homeward voyage, Emerson jotted down in his diary, one Sunday, a few sentences that hold the clew alike to his ineffective past and to his famous future. "Milton describes himself in his letter to Diodati as enamored of moral perfection. He did not love it more than I. That which I cannot yet declare has been my angel from childhood until now. It has separated me from men. It has watered my pillow. It has driven sleep from my bed. It has tortured me for my guilt. It has inspired me with hope. It cannot be defeated by my defeats. It cannot be questioned, though all the martyrs apostatize. It is always the glory that shall be revealed; it is the 'open secret' of the universe."

Glad after his year of absence to see America again, Emerson found himself still willing to preach in Unitarian churches from time to time, as he had opportunity, but more and more he tended to substitute the Lyceum platform, with its wider freedom, for the pulpit. His first lectures touched lightly on natural science, but he soon shifted his ground to biography and literature. He had been at home scarcely a year, when in his retirement at Concord, whither he presently brought another bride, he registered a vow. "Henceforth I design not to utter any speech, poem, or book that is not entirely and peculiarly my work." From this time on Emerson realized in himself his definition of a great man, "who in the midst of the crowd keeps, with perfect sweetness, the independence of solitude." Among the clamorous reforms and philanthropies of the day, he was often reproached with indifference; but he was not indifferent. He was faithful to his own. He would sometimes wake in the dark, tormented with the nightmare of slavery, blaming himself for standing aloof from so tremendous a moral issue, but would take comfort in the reminder that it was his individual mission to free "imprisoned thoughts, far back in the brain of man." Addressing a New York audience on *The Fugitive Slave Law*, four years after Webster's momentous speech, Emerson said: "I do not often speak to public questions; they are odious and hurtful, and it seems like meddling or leaving your work. I have my own spirits in prison; — spirits in deeper prisons, whom no

man visits if I do not. And then I see what havoc it makes with any good mind, a dissipated philanthropy. The one thing not to be forgiven to intellectual persons is, not to know their own task." On the rare occasions when he overstepped his rule, as in his speech in Concord town hall upon the assault on Charles Sumner, his speech at the Kansas Relief meeting in Cambridge, his John Brown speeches in Boston and Salem, his Washington speech on American Civilization, his joyous greeting of the Emancipation Proclamation, his eulogy of the martyred President, Emerson showed himself every inch a man. The strong indignation and stern control of his address upon the emancipation of the negroes in the British West Indies, for example, are in marked contrast to his general serenity of tone. The strain of American practicality, almost shrewdness, that coexisted with all his mysticism is hinted in various titles applied to Emerson, "a winged Franklin," "a Yankee Shelley," "the Buddha of the West." He had from childhood, however, a certain unhandy quality, together with an unreadiness and awkwardness that put him in eclipse beside his spirited brothers and remained with him into mature life. He often lamented the "frigidity and labor" of his talk with people at large. He was so unskilful with tools that once, as he was plying the spade in gardening, his little Waldo anxiously cried out: "Papa, I am afraid you will dig your leg." In lecturing, according to Lowell, "he boggled, he lost his place, he had to put on his glasses." Emerson's

own comment on his imperfection ran: "I was created a seeing eye, and not a useful hand," and even as he recognized values in his early poverty, the "straightened lines" on which he "walked up to manhood," so was he "very patient of this folly or shame," these "manifold imbecilities" of his, in the belief that worldly disadvantages saved his spirit the distraction of worldly success, enabling him to "nourish" his "virtue in a private place."

"Pale genius roves alone,
No scout can track his way,
None credits him till he have shown
His diamonds to the day.

Not his the feaster's wine,
Nor land, nor gold, nor power,
By want and pain God screeneth him
Till his elected hour."

The hour struck in 1836, when Emerson published his little book on *Nature*. It found few readers, but those readers could not be unaware of the fact that an apostle of idealism had arisen in the land. "Standing," ran the quiet text, "on the bare ground, — my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, — all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part and particle of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances, — master or servant, is then a trifle

and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty."

In this initial volume there was nothing of the novice. The thoughts which he then put into print Emerson had brooded from boyhood. His touch was firm. He had at last begun to speak the "open secret" which had so long possessed his soul, crippling him for the lesser utilities. In the autumn in which the book was issued, Emerson and Ripley, with two others, invited a few truth-seekers, including Alcott, Margaret Fuller, and Theodore Parker, to meetings designed for the finding out a better way of thought and life. These assemblies continued, at irregular intervals, for seven or eight years. During the latter half of this period, the Transcendentalists, as they had come to be called, issued a quarterly, *The Dial*, with George Ripley and Elizabeth Peabody for business managers, while Margaret Fuller and Emerson served successively as editors. Although this little group of enthusiasts embraced a wide variety of opinions, the central Transcendental position seems to have been faith in the intuitions and the consciousness as against authority of church or state or system. The emphasis was on freedom of thought and action, on self-culture and self-reliance, and on the spiritual view of life as against the material. "Nature is too thin a screen," said Emerson, "the glory of the One breaks in everywhere." "God?" he asked. "It is all God. . . . The world is saturated with deity."

A little less than a year after the publication of *Nature*,

Emerson was invited to give the annual address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard. In this he claimed that the American scholar, looking to nature and to life for education more than to mere books, should be free and brave, not daunted by Europe nor the Past, but planting himself "indomitably on his instincts," and revering his own individuality as "inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men." "This grand oration," says Holmes, "was our intellectual Declaration of Independence." By this time Emerson had both his following and his tribunal. Many ardent young souls of Cambridge were already with him, and one of these, James Russell Lowell, then an undergraduate, treasured that scene in memory "for its picturesqueness and its inspiration. What crowded and breathless aisles, what windows clustering with eager heads, what enthusiasm of approval, what grim silence of foregone dissent!"

The senior class of the Harvard Divinity School asked Emerson, the following year, to deliver their graduating discourse. His attitude toward historical Christianity, evinced on another occasion by his declaring it "the office of a true teacher to show us that God is, not was: that he speaketh, not spake," now aroused active opposition. Men who had hitherto only laughed at what they deemed his amiable lunacies, began to frown. Unitarians joined with Trinitarians in protest. But the new teacher, no less gentle than courageous, held calmly on his way, and pilgrims of every heterodox fashion, from the eater

of unleavened bread to the Sun-worshipper wrapped in a sheet, turned their course toward Concord. It was a touch of irony in fate that Emerson, who of all men most disliked crude vehemence and fanaticism, who abhorred an "excess of fellowship," should become the focus of the reformers. New England was seething with social experiments and moral convictions. Whittier wrote poems against the gallows. Alcott's daughters, the "Little Women" of happy memory, never tasted meat till they were women indeed. Negro slavery, corporal punishment, prison discipline, women's rights, total abstinence, foreign missions, dress, money, marriage, education, were all under hot discussion. Community life was variously attempted. Ripley's experiment of Brook Farm, in which Emerson courteously declined to engage, tried to combine the labors of pitchfork, hoe, and milking-pail with æsthetics and metaphysics. Alcott's vegetarian venture of Fruitlands, which, again, did not "commend itself" to Emerson "as the way of greatness," took on the features of asceticism. While each of the Transcendentalists was preaching his own doctrine or riding his own hobby, their leader went on living as sane and modest a life as the "great craving humanity" that knocked at his door from one week's end to another would permit. Withdrawn into his study, he would work at "large leisure in noble mornings, opened by prayer or by readings of Plato, or whatsoever else is dearest to the Morning Muse." His way of using books was like his way of using nature. He attempted little in the line

of exact and critical knowledge, but he dipped into his favorite volumes, Oriental bards, Greek sages, Christian mystics, for inspiration and suggestion, for seeds of thought. His gleanings from library or woodland stroll took form in aphorisms, often exquisitely chiselled, which he would afterwards sort out, arrange under subjects, and strive to weld together into lectures and essays. He himself sighed over his "paragraphs incompressible, each sentence an infinitely repellent particle." Shaped by such a method, the Emerson essay naturally shows little sequence or development of thought. It does not arch in perfect curve, like a rainbow, but sparkles like a nebula of star-stuff. Yet it matters less that no single essay is a logical unit, for, taken together, all the essays are upon one theme and tend to one result. As Emerson said of Carlyle's letters, they "savour always of eternity."

"My whole philosophy, which is very real," Emerson wrote, "teaches acquiescence and optimism." He was at peace in the will of God. He had attained the Oriental passivity. "Fear and hope are alike beneath Intuition; it asks nothing, and is raised above passion." "Grief is abnormal," he said, and sin grew to him less and less a reality. "Nothing shall warp me from the belief that every man is a lover of the truth." Away from home, he sent back his love to the "little saints of the nursery." He did not argue, but spoke with authority. "I know that the universe can receive no detriment, that there is a remedy for every wrong, and a satisfaction

for every soul." "I have heard that death takes us away from ill things, not from good. I have heard that, when we pronounce the name of man, we pronounce the belief of immortality."

Yet it was not for any philosophy, as such, any scheme of thought or any phraseology of truth, that Emerson contended. Heart and soul he was, as he wrote on that ocean passage, "enamored of moral perfection." He longed with ineffable longing for the day when humanity should be as clear glass for the God-light shining through, — "the glory that shall be revealed." His one perennial theme is the spirit of man in relation to ideal beauty, the mortal in the presence of immortality. "Every moment new changes and new showers of deceptions to baffle and distract him. And when, by and by, for an instant, the air clears and the cloud lifts a little, there are the gods still sitting around him on their thrones, — they alone with him alone." Whether studying the uses of nature to man, whether insisting on the sacred rights of personality, whether extolling Love or Friendship, Heroism, Manners or Worship, whether searching into the individual secret of Plato, Swedenborg, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Napoleon, Goethe, it is always the Conduct of Life in its fine and noble sense with which Emerson's thought is occupied.

Wonderful to tell, he did not, in his passion for human perfection, lose patience with the concrete lives about him. His harshest criticisms implied a praise. "Thoreau," he said, "is with difficulty sweet." The Concord

farmers found this pleasant neighbor of theirs, though a little tongue-tied himself, an admiring listener to their blunt talk over the stone-wall or in town-meeting. "It was good," wrote Hawthorne, "to meet him in the wood-paths, or sometimes in our avenue, with that pure intellectual gleam diffused about his presence like the garment of a shining one; and he so quiet, so simple, so without pretension, encountering each man alive as if expecting to receive more than he could impart." With a frank recognition of the intellectual and moral leadership of minorities in the present state of society, Emerson's essential democracy outwent that of Jefferson and Jackson. "As to what we call the masses, and common men,—there are no common men. All men are at last of a size; and true art is only possible in the conviction that every talent has its apotheosis somewhere. Fair play and an open field and freshest laurels to all who have won them! But heaven reserves an equal scope for every creature." As he would not take note of ugliness and evil, deeming these but temporary phases of the eternal beauty, the eternal good, so in practice, as in theory, he put smilingly from him the common talk of people's faults. "We should study rather," spoke this shaper of golden sentences, "to make humanity beautiful to each other."

This wisdom of kindness is strikingly exemplified in Emerson's relations with MARGARET FULLER. Her temperament was stormy, her egotism pronounced, her attitude often aggressive, and when she determined to make a personal friend of Emerson, all the resources of his

courtesy were taxed to meet the invasion. But by gracious habit of patience and of high expectation he learned her nobleness and, later, took his place at the head of her illustrious biographers, whose judgment of her has become the judgment of time. It is no part of Lowell's greatness to-day that he showered with sneering witticisms the "Miranda" of his *Fable for Critics*, and Hawthorne's harsh detractions have redounded to his discredit rather than to hers; but it is permanently to the praise of Emerson, Higginson, and James Freeman Clarke that, beyond plain face and repellent bearing, they discerned what the English poet Landor was to hail as a "glorious soul." The literary women of America, before the day of Margaret Fuller, pursued their quest for truth or beauty with all feminine timidity. The craven air of Hannah Adams, who had toiled over book-making all her apologetic days and, with eyes grown dim, was looking wistfully toward heaven as a place where she might find her "thirst for knowledge fully gratified," is an extreme viewed from which the arrogance of her young contemporary is almost welcome. "Such a predetermination," said Carlyle, "to eat this big Universe as her oyster or her egg, and to be absolute empress of all height and glory in it that her heart could conceive, I have not before seen in any human soul."

Margaret Fuller's literary significance does not chiefly depend upon the actual writings that her busy hand turned off. As the underpaid, overworked editor of the "aëriform" *Dial* and, later, as stated contributor of

critical articles to the *New York Tribune*, whose famous chief, Horace Greeley, found her "a most fearless and unselfish champion of truth and human good at all hazards," she accomplished a fair amount of creditable work, suggestive rather than symmetrical, but her inspiring personality counted for more than her best paragraphs. Curious reading now is the record of those Boston "Conversations," where Margaret Fuller discussed, in the heart of the Transcendental camp, the spiritual significance of Greek mythology. There were the enthusiast, George Ripley, and his martyr-wife; Hedge, the German scholar; Wheeler, the Greek scholar; Story, the poet-sculptor; Jones Very, the lyric mystic; the Peabody sisters, the lovely Elizabeth Hoar, James Freeman Clarke, Alcott, and, now and then, Emerson, who remembered these "as a fair, commanding troop, every one of them adorned by some splendor of beauty, of grace, of talent, or of character." With her pen, as with the spoken word, Margaret, as they all called her, was serious, strenuous, but neither soundly learned nor essentially æsthetic. She was not an artist born, and her education, though pursued at high pressure, had been solitary and partial. With all her courage, the years had weighed heavily. "Her face is full of the marks of pain," wrote a girlish worshipper when Margaret was thirty-one. "Young as I am, I feel old when I look at her." Youth and sweetness of life came to that craving nature in far Italy, where, like Mrs. Browning, she made the cause of Italian liberty her own.

Efficiently and tenderly she nursed the wounded patriots in hospital during the siege of Rome and wrote a history of the short-lived republic. This manuscript was lost in that tragic shipwreck which, in sight of the American coast, overwhelmed her brave young Italian husband, the Marquis Ossoli, their little son, and Margaret herself. Her principal contribution remaining to our literature is an essay on *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, claiming for women that larger life which her own career has in no small measure furthered.

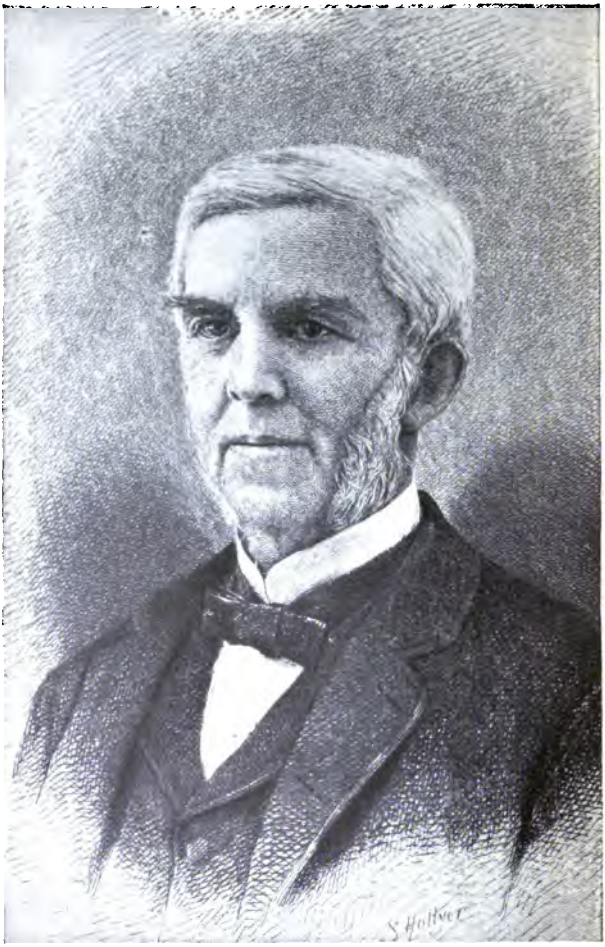
As Emerson represented the ideal hope of Transcendentalism, and Margaret Fuller embodied its "holy earnestness," those phases of the movement which have won it the title of "a Puritan carnival" are suggested in the career of AMOS BRONSON ALCOTT. A farmer's boy, he began life as a Yankee peddler, but soon turned to teaching, for which he showed a remarkable aptitude. His original experiments in his Connecticut district school were often in line with the new educational ideas of Europe. Encouraged by his success, Alcott undertook to teach in Boston, where he fell under the influence of Channing, Emerson, and Garrison. He became an Abolitionist, a vegetarian, and "a large piece of spiritual New England." Emerson was enthusiastic in Alcott's praise, describing him as "a man who cannot write, but whose conversation is unrivalled in its way; such insight, such discernment of spirits, such pure intellectual play, such revolutionary impulses of thought." It presently appeared, unluckily for Mrs. Alcott and the little girls,

that this new Oracle could not earn a living. Heresy, Abolitionism, and debt combined to break up the Boston school. The solemn sage, whose most provoking quality was the serious way in which he took himself, then settled at Concord in a little cottage, well-gardened, where he presented the figure, according to the admiring Dr. Channing, of "Orpheus at the plough," working out among the neighbors as a farm hand while he meditated those nuggets of occult wisdom which made the *Orphic Sayings* of the *Dial.* He shared Thoreau's disgust with government, especially in its function of taxation, and Ripley's eager faith in community life. Brook Farm, however, was not to Alcott's mind. Only eight miles from Boston, it served too well as a social magnet, and the graces of life, though practised in shirt-sleeves and aprons, were so obvious there as to give this ascetic sage the impression, which Mrs. Ripley might have corrected, that existence at Brook Farm was "miserable, joyous, and frivolous." The austere Paradise which he himself projected was called Fruitlands. Fourteen sylvan acres, about twenty miles from Concord, served as the site of an experiment that came near the startling end of sheer starvation. Flesh, fish, eggs, milk, butter, cheese, tea, coffee, rice, molasses, and those base vegetables, as potatoes, that ripen under ground were all forbidden. Clothing was scanty and, theoretically, white. The use of manure in farming was rejected as an insult to the earth. The rights of canker-worms were held inviolate. Driven by grim hunger back to Concord, Alcott, after a season

of humiliation, took up a Socratic fashion of lecturing, known as "Conversations," by which, with intervals of rustic carpentry, he managed to subsist. Generous friends made up his deficits, and his wife bore the heavy burden that those Transcendental wives carried so smilingly, until her merry-hearted daughter, Louisa, took it from the tired shoulders with a strong hand.

All that excited laughter and impatience in New England Transcendentalism is hinted in Alcott's course, the erratic orbit of a now faded star, but he may justly claim a place in Emerson's defence of that strange spiritual brotherhood: "And what if they eat clouds and drink wind, they have not been without service to the race of man." This Yankee version of idealism is of immeasurable value as a protest, still great in our traditions, against the sordid, the showy, and the self-indulgent elements at present so prominent in American life.

The chief practical issue of all this enthusiasm for ideas was the abolition of slavery. New England took the lead in that fiery reform by virtue not only of her Puritanic earnestness, but of her Transcendental courage. She had, with Lincoln, "faith that right makes might." Wendell Phillips rejoiced in the John Brown raid because, as he said, "twenty-two men have been found ready to die for an idea." But in the actual clash of conflict the sages gave place to the soldiers. Transcendentalism was seen thenceforth only in its fruits. Theological strife, meanwhile, had quieted. The two




Oliver Wendell Holmes.

contending pulpits were one in patriotism. The magnetic eloquence of Henry Ward Beecher's appeals in Plymouth Church made for the same end as Edward Everett Hale's thrilling tract *The Man without a Country*. During the latter half of the century, Unitarianism has been less aggressive. Its main work, as affecting American literature, was done when it had opened the door to liberal thought. Now the door stands wide. The higher criticism has lost its terrors, and the theory of evolution, as held in England by Herbert Spencer, has been disseminated throughout the United States by John Fiske's crisp presentation in his *Destiny of Man* and *Idea of God*. The enlargement of doctrine has been accompanied by an enrichment of ritual, due mainly to the influence of the Episcopal church, recognizing as it does the function of beauty in promoting and interpreting the religious aspiration.

II. **Criticism of Society.** — It is not possible to make any hard and fast distinction between the literature that treats of the inner life and the literature that deals with the expression of such life in social forms. From Transcendentalism sprang Brook Farm. Yet in general the thought of Emerson is focussed on spirit, while the thought of OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES plays over the visible surface of society. Holmes' novels, it is true, are directly concerned with presenting, from a physician's point of view, the problem of human accountability. How far, ask these books, is the deed, and the choice which causes the deed, determined by

subtle powers beyond the personal control? *Elsie Venner* studies the workings of ante-natal snake-poison in a girl's blood and brain. Whose was the evil impulse? *The Guardian Angel* suggests a hovering circle of ancestress shadows, the two faces of a holy martyr and a wild Indian most distinct in that cloudy company, all pressing with contending influences upon one maiden heart. Is the individual only the helpless resultant of heredity? *A Mortal Antipathy* sets forth the affecting case of a love-smitten recluse who had been so terrified in babyhood by a fall from the arms of a girl that, thenceforward, the mere sight of a young woman literally frightened him almost to death. For once, Holmes took an absurd situation seriously, and the public laughed in the wrong place. These are the underlying themes of his stories, but, in their development, attention is largely diverted from the physiology and psychology involved to frank and lively pictures of New England village life.

Somewhat the same may be said of the famous table-talk series. The monologues of the Autocrat often recur to the haunting themes of heredity, the will and moral responsibility, but that immortal chat runs mainly on such matters as Republicanism, Mutual Admiration Societies, horse-racing, theatricals, Lyceum audiences, drunkenness, tact, meerschaums, athletics, dandies, and the guillotine. The breakfast-table itself is a little community, where the social obligations and affinities play their daily part. The voluble Autocrat, the old

gentleman who sat opposite, with a sentiment shut inside his silver watch, the divinity student, allowed to "take a certain share in the conversation, so far as assent or pertinent questions" might be involved, that reprehensible young man answering to the name of John, the landlady who stirred the puddings, while her daughter with the long ringlets played the accordion, little Benjamin Franklin, the poor relation in black bombazine, and the school-mistress, sweet as the tea-rose which, in the last chapter, the happy Autocrat makes her wear over the copper breast-pin that was red-armed Biddy's wedding-gift,—all these are members of a social whole, though that whole is only a boarding-house. It is for these, in good part, that the book is loved. The personalities lend flavor to the opinions. Pervading all is that rare social genius of the Doctor himself. He could, when he chose, talk quite as well as the Autocrat and radiate as genial and urbane an atmosphere. Lowell felt the unique quality in Holmes and based his own acceptance of the *Atlantic* editorship on the condition of regular contributions from the merry little sage of Beacon Hill.

Close upon "the five-barred gate" though he was, the poet-professor struck out on his new style with all the freshness of a boy. In the first number of the magazine began *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*. It had come from his mind, said Holmes, "almost with an explosion, like the champagne cork," and it popped at once into high favor with the public. The novelty, the drollery,

the wit and wisdom of it, took the reading-world by storm. America had a new prose classic. "*The Professor at the Breakfast-Table*," in the author's own account, "followed immediately on the heels of the *Autocrat*. The Professor was the *alter ego* of the first personage. In the earlier series he had played a secondary part, and in this second series no great effort was made to create a character wholly unlike the first. The Professor was more outspoken, however, on religious subjects, and brought down a good deal of hard language on himself and the author to whom he owed his existence." Around this second breakfast-table still sat some of the Autocrat's companions, — the old gentleman opposite, the divinity student, the landlady and her daughter, Benjamin Franklin, the Bombazine, and the young man called John, but certain more romantic boarders had been added to the group. The Professor talked less than the Autocrat, and not so well, but he was a better listener and observer. He detected the unsavory traits of the Koh-i-noor with the purple-black moustache, dreaded the Model of all the Virtues, and followed with wide-awake sympathy the love story of Iris and the young Marylander, interwoven as it was with the pitiful end of Little Boston, "the misshapen little creature covered with Nature's insults." *The Poet of the Breakfast-Table* appeared some fifteen years after its predecessors, being, the author said, "not so much a continuation as a resurrection." The boarding-house, made famous by Autocrat and Professor, had now become select. A bequest from the old gentleman had enabled

the landlady to wear a smart cap and educate Benjamin Franklin for a physician. The people for whom she poured the coffee were representative of Boston culture. There were the Master of Arts, the Man of Letters, the Scarabee, and the young Astronomer, destined to find his guiding stars, at last, in the eyes of poor little Scheherezade, who lived by scribbling stories for the *Weekly Bucket*. The Member of the House, the Capitalist, the Lady, the Register of Deeds, the Salesman, and That Boy, with his inspired pop-gun, lent variety. The talk, no less pungent than before, was richer and more mellow, ranging over literature, science, metaphysics, music, the learned professions, authorship, sects, germs, freaks, time, and eternity.

The boarding-house was closed forever, the breakfast-table hushed, but once again, when his years numbered eighty-one, the inimitable talker met his friends, this time *Over the Tea-Cups*. The tone here is personal and reminiscent. Sunset lights fall upon the tea-table, where a poem always waits, tucked into the silver sugar-bowl, but there is no abatement of the old-time mirth and kind sagacity. The thread of story droops more loosely than before, but the various "Tea-cups," the choicest china of Beacon Hill and Cambridge, are individualized, and Number Seven has his conversational innings no less than the Dictator. "The cracked tea-cup brings out the ring of the sound ones as nothing else does. Remember also that the soundest tea-cup does not always hold the best tea, nor the cracked tea-cup the worst."

In their own discursive, friendly, but keen and fearless fashion, these four books, which span a generation, try New England on the three charges of deficient breeding, intellectual illiberality, and religious intolerance. Holmes was something of an aristocrat, more of a rationalist, and, most, a humanitarian. In him the Unitarian reaction had been emphasized by scientific training. He was an anti-mystic, standing for the sunny and the sensible. There was more of Franklin in him than of Edwards. He was a Bostonian to the core; the civilization he depicts is a Yankee civilization, growing in refinement through the four books, and the controversies into which he enters are eminently New England controversies, already passing into history by the time the last of the table-talk series appeared.

The achievement of Holmes has not been duplicated. The trenchant writings of Mary Abigail Dodge, better known as Gail Hamilton, and the light-hand essays of Robert Grant should not be forgotten, but now that realistic fiction is the fashion, studies of our present-day society usually take form as novels. A conspicuous instance of this is the recent work of CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER, a natural essayist and most delightful humorist, who, with the late Mrs. Stowe, "Mark Twain," and the poet, Richard Burton, has continued the literary tradition of Hartford. In *A Little Journey in the World* and *The Golden House* we have essentially an arraignment of the wealthy class of New York on counts of selfishness, falseness, and materialism. Story-interest

is subordinate to interest of scene and character. Pictures of the Exchange, the opera, the millionnaire palace, the midnight Bohemia, the elaborate social functions, stand in shamed contrast beside the tawdry, tragic glimpses of the East Side. The figures of the Wall-Street Napoleon, the gay ladies with their wines and cigarettes and serpentine dances, the gilded spendthrifts making a task of idleness, are confronted by ascetic priest and hard-working doctor of the poor, by honest, thoughtful men and faithful women, and the dim, terrible majority living and dying in the slums. This new criticism of our new phase of democracy, finding indirect expression in novel and short story, has direct expression, also, and that in overwhelming bulk. The yearly issue of sociological studies, economic discussions, labor reports, reform pamphlets, socialist tracts, and the like chokes the press, but all this mass of academic treatise and popular polemics falls outside the pale of literature. The works of Edward Bellamy may be mentioned here, although their guise is that of fiction. His *Looking Backward* sells by hundreds of thousands and has been translated into nearly every European tongue. Like its recent successor, *Equality*, the book forecasts an American Utopia, but fails to point the way.

III. **Criticism of Letters.** — The critic is the middleman of literature. He mediates between writers and readers, making his own profit out of the transaction. Of his legitimate functions, one is that of the herald.

He may announce a fresh influence in letters, as when the elder Dana called our belated attention to the Lake School Poets; but in the earlier half of the century it was oftener the task of the American critic to introduce to his countrymen the standard literatures of the Old World. At Harvard, Everett stood for Greece, and Ticknor for Spain, as Norton now stands for Italy. A more delicate office entrusted to criticism is the estimate of new values, the judgment of contemporary books, and the ranking of living men. Here the critics are commonly wrong, as time has a cynical way of showing. Poe was irritated beyond measure by the provincial overpraise that characterized American reviews of American productions, yet with all his natural acumen he could not himself maintain the cosmopolitan tone. Few are the names even recognized to-day out of the list of New York literati he commended. There is, too, a dilettante criticism, which uses a book as a text, or pretext, for an independent essay aiming at pure entertainment. This, a late development in American letters, is well exemplified by the brilliant brevities of Agnes Repplier. The "short studies" of Hamilton Wright Mabie, our latest evangelist of culture, approximate rather, in spirit, if not in scope, to that larger criticism, interpretative and comprehensive, which in our present century began with EDWIN PERCY WHIPPLE, rose to its height in JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, and is still strongly maintained by EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN. Of these, Lowell alone has claims to rank beside the chief critics

J. H. Lawrence

of contemporary Europe, but Whipple's frank and lucid lectures hold a permanent place in American regard, while editions still multiply of Stedman's *Victorian Poets* and *Poets of America.*

Lowell's most valuable prose is contained in his three main volumes of critical essays, — *My Study Windows* and the first and second series of *Among My Books.* At twenty-six he had published *Conversations on Some of the Old Poets*, principally Chaucer, Chapman, and Ford. This little book had in it so much of his characteristic fervor and keenness that he was tempted, thirty years later, to reprint it, but decided, not unwisely, that it was too immature. Lowell's second volume of prose, *Fireside Studies*, was made up, like the three important books which followed it, of magazine articles, but the lighter ones were garnered first. In later life, after his diplomatic career had rendered authorship subordinate to statesmanship, Lowell issued two collections of his public addresses and political essays. These enhanced American pride in our distinguished minister, and relieved the national alarm lest he might fall a victim to Anglomania or other feudal malady. He urged, however, that democracy has not justified itself until it has made itself gracious and winsome, produced the noblest types of manhood, and lifted life above the merely material and commonplace. His experience of European governments confirmed his loyalty to the Republic. "No other method of conducting the affairs of men," he said, "is so capable of sloughing off its peccant parts

as ours, because in no other are the forces of life at once so intense and so universally distributed." Throughout his course Lowell set a high example of the Scholar in Politics, maintaining under partisan strain and din a clear intelligence, moral courage, and incisive utterance which went far toward stimulating and directing the patriotic passion of the land. His concluding volumes of prose, small harvests, but ripe and sweet, reverted to literature.

The range of the literary essays embraced in *My Study Windows* and *Among My Books* is wide. The four foreign languages pertaining to Lowell's Harvard chair, French, German, Spanish, Italian, all of which, he gayly asserted, he spoke "like a native (of Cambridge)," might point to these pages for proof that he read them, at least, like a native of Parnassus. Here we have the acute studies of Rousseau and Lessing, and the great essay upon Dante, supplemented, later on, by the Don Quixote address. Few men have written better of Shakespeare; no man so well of Chaucer. To read Lowell's essays comprehendingly is a literary education in itself.

His method, although in reality searching, is not logically direct, but discursive. Like a boy on his way to school, he is tempted to explore every pasture the path crosses and follow up every stream. Lowell was too wide-awake, too warm-hearted, too vital, to keep strictly within the orderly limits of his theme. His temperament was too robust, moreover, for the finest sensitive-

ness. He did better by Dryden than by Spenser. And his style, by virtue of this same exuberance of life, is so charged with metaphor as to bring down upon it an English cry of "flashy." For this figurative excess, this flush and fulness more attractive still to many readers than the cold clarity of Arnold's prose, Lowell was doubtless much indebted to his Elizabethan studies. His taste is most open to attack, when he is in mischievous mood. Then no pun is too bad for him to perpetrate. In the Milton essay, for instance, Lowell often foregoes due critical decorum for sheer fun and frolic. But when his metaphors spring from that swift imaginative sympathy, which constitutes one of his strongest charms, the fault-finder, however well taken his point of literary objection may be, feels himself at a human disadvantage. Speaking, for example, in his Harvard address, of the effect of ancient memories in places "on which Time has laid his hand only in benediction," Lowell, in a passage open to stylistic and even grammatical reproach, sweetens poetic thought with feeling reverent and tender: "For myself, I never felt the working of this spell so acutely as in those gray seclusions of the college quadrangles and cloisters at Oxford and Cambridge, conscious with venerable associations, and whose very stones seemed happier for being there. The chapel pavement still whispered with the blessed feet of that long procession of saints and sages and scholars and poets, who are all gone into a world of light, but whose memories seem to consecrate the soul from all ignobler companionship."

The English scholarship represented by Longfellow and Lowell, broad, æsthetic, humanized, is already out of date. The German training has given to American universities philologists in place of poets. The new scholarship is superior to the old in linguistic accuracy, in exactitude of detail, but bears fruit in erudite editions of old English texts rather than in fresh creations of literary art. An American veteran here is George P. Marsh, who turned attention to the sources of our speech. The researches of William D. Whitney of Yale have borne upon language at large, but his special services to English grammar and lexicography should not be ignored. Chief editor of the *Century Dictionary*, to him, too, it fell to revise the work of that dauntless pioneer, Noah Webster, whose spelling-book has sold its sixty millions. A limited amount of historical and æsthetic criticism still comes from college chairs, as Thomas R. Lounsbury's *Chaucer*, Vida D. Scudder's *Modern English Poets*, and Moses Coit Tyler's *History of American Literature*. The monumental work of Professor Child is priceless to the ballad-lover, while students of the American stage depend on Professor Matthews no less than on Laurence Hutton and William Winter. Although our original plays are of little value, no branch of English scholarship has been pursued here with more zeal and ability than the study of Shakespeare. Browning has his societies, and Walt Whitman his "fellowship," but Shakespeare has a shining line of American editors and commentators, reaching from Verplanck, a genuine

Knickerbocker, through Grant White, Hudson, Rolfe, Furness, to the recent work of Barrett Wendell.

IV. **History.** —There is no branch of American scholarship whose progress reflects the changing conditions apparent in our life and arts more clearly than history. The seventeenth century chroniclers, Captain John Smith in the South, Governors Bradford and Winthrop in New England, did little more than jot down a narrative, founded on their own observation and on hearsay, for the plain purpose of news-telling or record-keeping. In the eighteenth century, Beverly and Stith of Virginia, Cotton Mather, Prince, and Hutchinson of Massachusetts, in varying degree approached the modern conception of historical method, striving by patient investigation and judicial attitude to sift truth from falsehood, and recreate the past. The War of the Revolution and the War of 1812 showed no immediate results in historical writing, although Chief Justice Marshall's *Life of Washington*, our first American biography of scope and dignity, has historical values. But histories of individual states, as Belknap's *New Hampshire*, began to appear, and, in one city after another, historical societies were formed for the collection and preservation of local materials. The antiquarian was gradually evolved. President Sparks of Harvard, editor of many volumes of Washingtonian and other Revolutionary correspondence, had led the way in original research, hunting through governmental archives, at home and abroad, and through stores of family papers. The influence of Washington Irving,

in his biographies and historical narratives, which were often, although not always, founded upon first-hand authorities, made for vivacity and grace of historical style. The second division of the century, that middle period in which American literature reached the highest point as yet attained, is the day of our four great historians, Bancroft, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman. Men of prodigious toils and, in case of the last three, of rare artistic skill in composition, they produced rich, well-rounded works. Bancroft wrote directly of the United States, but the others chose semi-foreign themes, bearing on their own country, but allowing of picturesque and dramatic treatment. The Civil War brought out a crop of partisan accounts from the leaders in arms or politics, as Wilson and Greeley in the North, Davis and Stephens in the South. The autobiographies of Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan were eagerly received by the public. Lincoln's private secretaries, Hay and Nicolay, united in an elaborate political biography of their chief. Illustrated war papers, descriptions of battles and campaigns, and personal reminiscences of military service, are still a feature of the magazines, especially of the *Century*. Historical fiction is coming into fashion. But with all this popularization of history, on the one hand, university studies, on the other, have been growing ever more scientific and more highly specialized. The tendency is increasingly toward original research, toward the minute investigation of carefully limited fields, usually far from romantic. The monograph is in the saddle. Sociology

and economics, with their stress on institutions, affect the study of history. An extremely modern phenomenon, of a somewhat different order, is in evidence in California, where Hubert H. Bancroft, a successful publisher, has pushed the business method into authorship. At the cost of over half a million dollars and over half a lifetime, with the aid of a large staff of trained assistants, he has collected and sifted invaluable materials, which have been but partially used for the thirty-nine volumes of his *History of the Pacific States*. This signal application of the coöperative system has necessarily resulted in a mammoth quarry rather than an architectural creation. The editorial and original labors of Justin Winsor and the constitutional studies of James Schouler are achievements of note. John Fiske already ranks with the artists in historical narrative. Biography profits by the new critical spirit, while its popular appeal holds it to attractiveness of form. To the *Library of American Biography*, edited by Jared Sparks, has succeeded the *American Men of Letters Series*, edited by Charles Dudley Warner, and the *American Statesmen Series*, edited by John T. Morse.

The heroic quality of scholarship is nobly exemplified by that quartette of historians whose names America holds in peculiar honor. GEORGE BANCROFT, a Massachusetts man who supplemented his Harvard degree by a doctorate from Göttingen, passed his life largely in the public service, holding the successive appointments of Collector of the Port of Boston, Secretary of the Navy,

Minister to Great Britain, to Russia, and to Germany; yet in his patriotic purpose of writing the history of his country he never wavered. Wherever, in American cities or at foreign capitals, his political duties had placed him, he might be found ransacking the dustiest hoards of libraries or, in the pigeon-holed recesses of government buildings, straining his eyesight over yellow files of jealously guarded documents. Into his *History of the United States*, covering the Colonial and Revolutionary periods only, he poured the researches and studies of some sixty arduous years. The first two volumes came out in Jackson's administration, the completed work half a century later. His partiality for Jefferson and democracy called forth a competitive, but inferior, history by Richard Hildreth, whose bias was Whig. Bancroft's masterpiece is no easy reading, but its exhaustive method, accurate detail, and massive build give it a well-won preëminence.

WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT, of Salem birth, entered Harvard a few years in advance of Bancroft. There he met with a grievous mishap. During a moment of student frolic in the dining-hall, Prescott was struck full upon the eyeball by a flying crust of bread. He gradually became almost blind, but turned his own dimness into glowing color for the world. A moderate fortune made him master of his time and, after long thought, he decided to take up the work of an historian. Choosing for his subject Spain in her proud hour of American discovery and dominion, he strove for twenty years against the stupendous difficulties of his task. He could not

read for himself nor, until he had invented a frame that guided his hand, write for himself. He could not consult Spanish libraries nor search Spanish archives, save as his friends, travelling abroad, were glad to render what uncertain aid they might. But during the second span of twenty years, from 1837 to 1857, he produced a series of brilliant histories, *Ferdinand and Isabella*, *Conquest of Mexico*, *Conquest of Peru*, *Reign of Philip II.* These books were devoured by the public like romances, which, in fact, they much resemble. Prescott's attention was fastened upon the spectacle of life. He filled his wide canvas with splendid masses of figures, scenes of court and camp and tropical forest, battle-fields and strange barbaric pomp. Yet there was unity to the great design, and beauty of detail. The methods of work enforced by his disability aided rather than hindered the pictorial conception. His secretaries, blundering sadly over the Spanish, would read to him day after day and week after week, until his mind was fully stored. Then from the lonely brooding of the blind would leap the vivid chapter. A gentleman to the heart, magnanimities cluster about his memory. It was as natural to help him as it was for him to help. Irving, an earlier worker in the Spanish field, had gathered in Spain materials for a history of the Mexican conquest, but on hearing that Prescott was planning to write on the same theme, he not only quietly abandoned his own design, but put all his data at the younger man's disposal. How worthy Prescott was of the sacrifice is

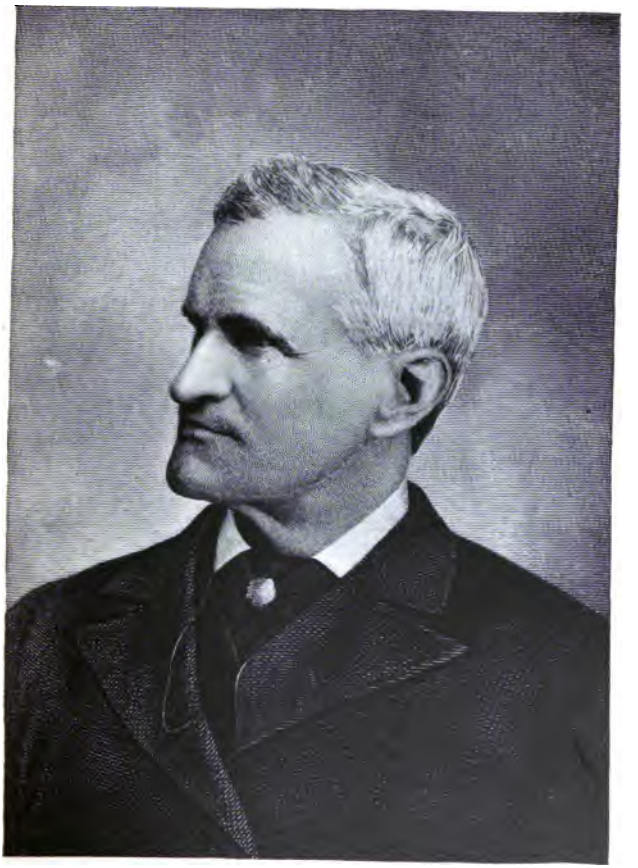
proved by the frank welcome and introduction he in turn accorded to a junior rival, JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY.

In 1850 the blind historian, in the prime of his life and labors, received a call from a young man then unknown to fame. Motley, born in Dorchester, a suburb of Boston, had supplemented his Harvard course by two years at Berlin and Göttingen. Strikingly handsome, brilliant and ambitious, he made his first bid for distinction with a Byronesque novel in two volumes. This was a flat failure, but he followed it up with the historical romance of *Merry Mount.* Meanwhile his American passion for freedom, his Puritan enthusiasm for the struggle of Protestantism against Romanism, had turned his thoughts to Holland. "I had not first made up my mind to write a history," he said, "and then cast about to take up a subject. My subject had taken me up, drawn me on, and absorbed me into itself. It was necessary for me, it seemed, to write the book I had been thinking much of, even if it were destined to fall dead from the press, and I had no inclination or interest to write any other." This work which Motley thirsted to undertake would entrench upon the ground of Prescott's *Philip II.*, announced but not as yet begun. On hearing of the announcement, Motley, as soon as he could rally from the keenness of his disappointment, went to Prescott, offering to surrender his own plans, but the veteran smiled on his scruples, gave him the most disinterested encouragement and cheer, offered him the use of his own library and, in the preface to

*Philip II.*, generously heralded the new historian, calling attention to Motley's forthcoming work, which would, he said, elaborate what was merely an episode of the book in hand. With the eager patience of a born investigator, Motley toiled for years in the libraries and state archives of western Europe, his zest in the pursuit of truth transforming drudgery into delight. "Whatever may be the result of my labor," he wrote, "nobody can say that I have not worked like a brute beast, but I don't care for the result. The labor is in itself its own reward, and all I want." Motley's design was to write the full drama of that momentous epoch from the abdication of Charles V. to the Peace of Westphalia, naming his three acts the *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, *History of the United Netherlands*, and the *Thirty Years' War*. The first, published in 1856, scored an immediate success, attested by large sales in England and America, universal plaudits, and prompt translation into Dutch, German, French, and Russian. The second division of the great history was interrupted by the agitations of our Civil War and by public duties. Motley served as Minister to Austria under Lincoln, but was ill-treated by Johnson and resigned. Upon the completion of the *United Netherlands*, he was appointed by Grant Minister to England, only to experience the indignity of a prompt recall. Heartsore over these affronts, he turned to the writing of *John of Barnevelt* as a preliminary to the last third of his famous work, but the introductory study was hardly published when

Mrs. Motley died. From this blow he could not rally. The *Thirty Years' War* was never penned. Motley's high rank as an historian is secure. As searching as Bancroft, as graphic as Prescott, he outwent them both in comprehension of character, in dramatic quality, and impassioned force. He was too intense a lover of liberty and virtue to be quite impartial. William the Silent was his hero, and Philip II. his villain, but what prejudice he had was always of a noble sort.

The youngest of these four historians, FRANCIS PARKMAN, was of the same manly calibre as the others, and has, perhaps, wrought a more enduring fabric. He was a Boston boy, of the best Massachusetts ancestry. Reflecting the changing times, his great-grandfather had stood in the Congregational pulpit, his father in the Unitarian. The intervening grandfather, one of the old Jamaica merchants, had been of secular service in making the family fortune. As a child, Parkman was captivated by stories of the early New England settlements, with their struggle against the wilderness and the redman, and he was only a Harvard sophomore when the purpose of writing the history of the French and Indian War took firm possession of his mind. His special preparation was of his own devising. He spent his vacations camping and canoeing, and, in term, gave a goodly share of his time to practising the swift walk of the Indian, to feats of horsemanship and rifle-shooting. An injury suffered in the gymnasium gave excuse for a voyage to Italy, where, at Rome, he sought and secured lodging



Francis Parkman

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in a monastery, that he might study the priests. Two years after taking his degree, he elected a graduate course among the Black Hills of Dakota. With an equally adventurous cousin, he started from St. Louis on the emigrant trail in the spring of 1846. "My business," said Parkman, "was observation, and I was willing to pay dearly for the opportunity of exercising it," as indeed he did. For a long summer the young men lived in the saddle, rifle in hand, among Indians, half-breeds, and trappers, even taking up their abode, at last, in a village of savage Sioux, with whom they smoked and slept, feasted off dog-meat in the filthy lodges, and rode on buffalo hunts, but, to their youthful chagrin, had no opportunity of following on the war-path. The exposures and hardships of this wild life brought upon Parkman a wasting illness, which sapped his strength until, as he said, he was in a fair way of atoning for his love of the prairie "by resting there forever." He came home with health permanently impaired, but he had gained what he sought, — the study from the living model of those frontier types, brave, squaw, hunter, soldier, fur-trader, whose figures were to animate his Canadian wonder-tale. The account of this trip, as Parkman, whose sight was seriously affected, dictated it from a darkened room to his comrade, made his initial volume, *The Oregon Trail.* The scope of his conception had now so enlarged as to embrace the entire strife between England and France for the possession of North America, and by dint of forty industrious years he trans-

lated his dream into deed. He did not begin his story at the beginning, but at the end, opening his series of historical narratives with the *Conspiracy of Pontiac.* After a long interval came *Pioneers of France in the New World,* relating the first attempts at French colonization. Then followed in order the *Jesuits in North America,* describing those heroic missions which dared so much and did so little; the *Discovery of the Great West,* telling of the romantic exploration of the Mississippi; the *Old Régime in Canada,* occupied with the second half of the seventeenth century; *Count Frontenac,* treating of the first sharp clash between France and England; *Montcalm and Wolfe,* depicting the latter scenes of that long contest, and swinging the circle round again to the *Conspiracy of Pontiac.* A supplementary issue, *A Half-Century of Conflict,* filled in the gap between the Frontenac volume and its successor.

To his youthful studies from nature, Parkman had added the severest and most scrupulous research. His wealth secured him aid of secretaries and copyists, but five times he visited Europe in person to explore the French and English archives, and invalid though he was, he journeyed to every American locality, however difficult of access, that he desired to describe. When the doctors, who at the best allowed him but a brief working-day, sometimes only three or four isolated half-hours, were compelled by his exhaustion to debar him from his studies altogether, even for months at a time, he went quietly into his garden and tended his roses. For two

years he held the chair of horticulture at Harvard. But however warily he might bide his time, the first day of strength found him again among his books and manuscripts, with an amanuensis busy by his side. He was constantly on the verge of blindness, but other eyes made good the dimness of his own. The ardent ambition of youth and manhood's austere resolve were sacredly fulfilled. His work is already classic, and although Bancroft may be superseded, Prescott supplemented, and even Motley corrected, it does not yet appear that Parkman has left space for a successor. Although his technical process was strictly that of the modern historical student, his final conception was eminently imaginative and poetic. A past bright with chivalry, adventure, and wildwood romance lives again in his enchanting pages. Prescott could color the vanished scene, and Motley call up the spirits of the dead, but Parkman's magic wand has restored a whole dominion, with its own life and atmosphere. *France and England in North America* crowns the historic labors of the era, — labors that, for the union of undaunted purpose, scholarly devotion, and artistic vision are equalled in no other department of our American literature.

V. **Oratory.** — This art, even more than others, mirrors the national life. American eloquence has changed its form with its theme. The ringing appeals of Otis and Henry sufficed for a crisis in which the issue was comparatively clear. "The waves of rebellion," to adapt Hamilton's fine phrase, "sparkled with fire," but when

the revolt was once accomplished and perplexing questions of the national organization had arisen, the vehemence of oratory gave way to *The Federalist*, with its closely knit argumentation. The Civil War was preceded by a generation of forensic debate, for the moral aspect of the problems that centred about slavery was not absolutely patent except to the northern Abolitionists. Garrison swept aside all consideration of the rights of slaveholders, and yet under the law of the land they had their rights, which they forfeited only by armed rebellion. Lincoln, who, at an earlier time, would have had the government duly buy the human property it had so long recognized, justified the Emancipation Proclamation as "warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity." The Senate Chamber knew the complexities of the situation better than Faneuil Hall, and where the chief Abolition orator, WENDELL PHILLIPS, felt himself free to inveigh and denounce, Webster and Clay held themselves bound to examine and consider. A martyr is easily an extremist, and the Massachusetts Abolitionists had to undergo social ostracism and worse. Even so gentle a philanthropist as Lydia Maria Child, whose historical tales and editorship of the *Juvenile Miscellany* had made her widely popular, found her *Appeal in Behalf of that Class of Americans called Africans* extremely expensive in the diminution of her book sales and magazine subscriptions, and in the loss of her literary prestige. Phillips, a classmate of Motley at Harvard and no less elegant in tastes and bearing, having seen Garrison

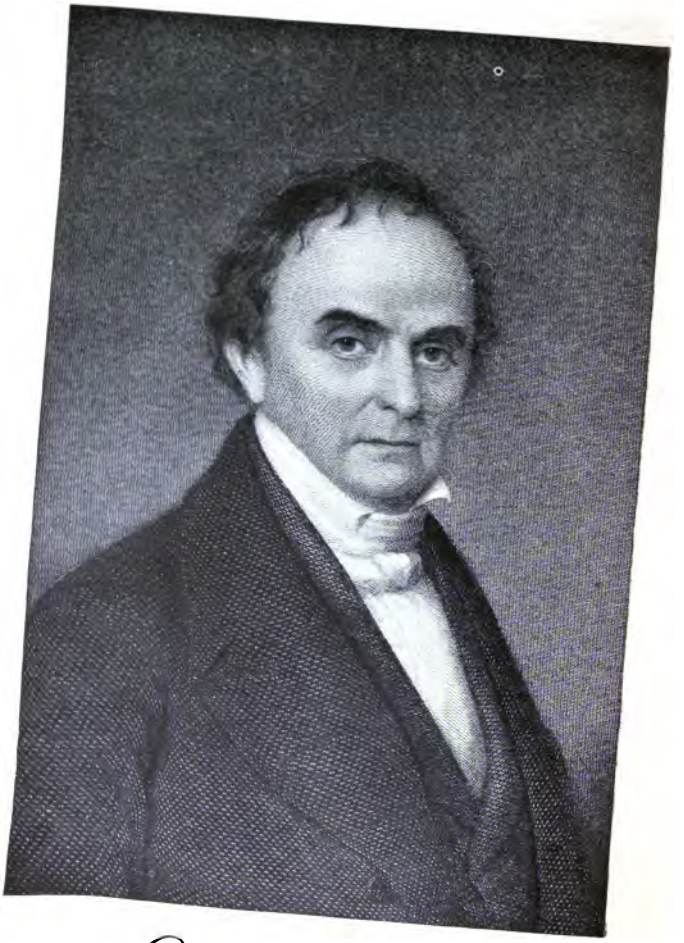
mobbed in 1835, lost little time in becoming his right-hand man. This brilliant recruit was young enough to smart under the swift recoil of those patrician Bostonians among whom he belonged by birth and breeding, but, impetuous, inconsistent, generous-hearted, with a rare native gift of eloquence, he flung himself, heart and soul, into the vulgar cause. Again and again, on the lecture platform, he faced such furious crowds that a body-guard of his friends had to escort him home. The better part of his valor was never discretion, but his burning speech did not bring upon him the fate at which Holmes mischievously hinted:

"Like our Motley's John of Barnveld, you have always been inclined
To speak — well, — somewhat frankly, — to let us know your mind,
And the Mynheers would have told you to be cautious what you said,
Or else that silver tongue of yours might cost your precious head."

The most notable victim of personal violence was CHARLES SUMNER, who began his lawyer's career in Boston with the brightest prospects, but, after identifying himself with Abolition, never again pocketed so much as a five-dollar fee. The aristocratic doors of Boston, save only Prescott's, and of Cambridge, save only Longfellow's, were shut against him. When he was sent to Congress, he bore himself manfully, speaking with ability and force on the unpopular side, until he suffered a barbarous caning at the hands of a southern opponent, who sprang upon him, as he was writing in his chair, from

behind. The cruel injuries to head and spine kept Sumner out of the active fight for the next four years, but his sufferings, intensifying the wrath of Massachusetts against slavery and all its brutal ways, fought for him.

Passions ran high in the Senate through those Homeric years of the middle century. There, until he fell dying in his seat in 1848, sat John Quincy Adams, "the old man eloquent," whom the southern senators, enraged by the stings of his persistent sarcasms, preferred to call "the old man malignant." There sat Jefferson Davis, Thomas Hart Benton, known as "Old Bullion," and the veteran HENRY CLAY, the "Great Pacificator." Foreseeing the agonies of Civil War, he did his utmost to avert it. Between the two embittered sections stood this familiar, friendly figure, anxious and conciliatory, urging concessions, devising compromises. In oratory he was, as a fellow Congressman has characterized him, "an impromptu, cut-and-thrust debater," less noted for set speeches than for his alertness in verbal sparring. His eloquence, nervous, thrilling, magnetic, was sure of its immediate effects, but loses lustre in the cold reproduction of print. The leader of the slavery party was JOHN C. CALHOUN, of South Carolina, whose ascetic, saintlike look was in accord with the austere simplicity of his oratorical manner. He was calm, logical, subtle, tenacious, — speaking, said a frequent hearer, "like a college professor demonstrating to his class." Calhoun's great personal influence with the more refined and scholarly element of the South added



David Webster

weight to the doctrine of State Rights, of which he was chief advocate and expositor. On the fourth of March, 1850, he was supported from his death-bed into the Senate Chamber to be present at the reading of his speech upon the California Compromise. He had always held with a dogmatic grip to the belief that slavery was "a good, a positive good," and in the closing words of this impressive address he solemnly declared that he had throughout his career striven against the Abolition agitation "with the intention of saving the Union, if it could be done, and, if it cannot, to save the section where it has pleased Providence to cast my lot, and which, I sincerely believe, has justice and the Constitution on its side."

Three days later, DANIEL WEBSTER rose in the Senate to make that momentous speech which shook the North as with an earthquake, and, so far as the trust and reverence of his constituency were concerned, fulfilled his own fear that it would "ruin" him. He, the pride and bulwark of New England, her

> "stateliest type of man,
> In port and speech Olympian,"

gave in his great assent to Clay's Compromises, with their odious measure of a Fugitive Slave Law. It was the turning-point in a life which had opened, humbly enough, sixty-eight years before, in a New Hampshire farm-house. Webster has himself told of the depth of his boyish feeling when he first learned that his hard-work-

ing father had planned to send him to Dartmouth College. "I remember," he wrote, "the very hill we were ascending, through deep snows, in a New England sleigh, when my father made his purpose known to me. I could not speak. How could he, I thought, with so large a family, and in such narrow circumstances, think of incurring so great an expense for me? A warm glow ran all over me, and I laid my head on my father's shoulder and wept." That was an eventful day for Dartmouth, too, as she realized twenty-one years later, when Webster saved her imperilled charter, winning his case before the Supreme Court of Washington by an impassioned plea which he considered one of the most significant successes of his life. He had entered on legal practice at the New Hampshire bar, a swarthy, "raven-haired fellow, with an eye as black as death's, and as heavy as a lion's." Nine years sufficed to put him at the head of his profession there, and he removed to Boston, where his continued achievements as a lawyer gave him a national renown. His part in the convention for revising the Constitution of Massachusetts approved his statesmanship, and his Plymouth and Bunker Hill orations, with the eulogy upon Adams and Jefferson, wrapped him in a blaze of glory. Webster had been twice sent from New Hampshire to Congress, and again, in 1822, he entered public life, to be for thirty years a central figure there, although, like Henry Clay, he was three times disappointed in the hope of the Presidency. Carlyle once said of him: "He looks like a sort of cathe-

dral," and, indeed, an almost superstitious veneration came to attach to that erect and portly form crowned by the "amorphous, crag-like face; the dull black eyes under the precipice of brows, like dull anthracite furnaces needing only to be *blown;* the mastiff mouth accurately closed." The unfathomable gaze of those dusky eyes awed the souls of men. For once the Yankee humor and audacity were abashed. Webster's very cravat, blue coat, and buff waistcoat seemed invested with an intellectual majesty. Even now, it is only needful to read over one of his grand speeches, as the second reply to Hayne, accounted his masterpiece, equally wonderful for its steady tramp of arguments and tremendous floods of feeling, to realize that overwhelming power. Webster's earnestness and force of mind impressed themselves like sheer weight. Much as his regal presence and organ-range of voice enhanced the first effect of his oratory, it remains in print colossal eloquence. It is little wonder that when a champion like this ranged himself on the side of the California Compromises, their measures should become law. Clay's policy had a temporary triumph, but that seventh of March speech shattered the Webster idolatry. In the view of New England, this northern advocate of the slave-power had put law above right, expediency above principle, and ambition above conscience.

"So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore,
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore!"

Emerson claimed that Webster had always shown himself deficient in moral sensibility. "Hence a sterility of thought, the want of generalization in his speeches, and the curious fact that, with a general ability which impresses all the world, there is not a single general remark, not an observation on life and manners, not an aphorism, that can pass into literature from his writings." The apologists for Webster maintain that he should be written into history a martyr, not a traitor. He was the supreme expounder and upholder of the national Constitution. He counted slavery an evil and was opposed to its extension, but he at no time admitted that slavery as existing in the Southern States could be assailed. He believed that the antislavery tide of feeling, which, on the seventh of March, he vainly strove to stem, endangered the stability of the Union. The burning passion of his life was for the Union, — "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable." Whether that crucial speech redounds to his shame or honor depends upon the motives of a deep, inscrutable heart. He himself avowed, at the hour, their patriotic purity: "I have a part to act, not for my own security or safety, for I am looking out for no fragment on which to float away from the wreck, if wreck there must be; but for the good of the whole and the preservation of all, and there is that which will keep me to my duty during the struggle, whether the sun and the stars shall appear or shall not appear for many days. I speak to-day for the preservation of the Union."

Outside the Washington storm-centre, the prevailing oratory was hardly less militant and denunciatory. Plymouth pulpit, where the fearless, warm-hearted HENRY WARD BEECHER kindled great audiences to generous life, was an antislavery platform, though not of the Garrison type. At the bar, RUFUS CHOATE, rapid, vivid, and incisive, sometimes flashed aside from his argument for the charm of a moment's mirth or beauty, but the gentler graces of eloquence were best represented by EDWARD EVERETT. This most accomplished gentleman, who was successively Harvard tutor, Unitarian pastor, Professor of Greek at Harvard, Congressman, Governor of Massachusetts, Minister to England, and Secretary of State, illustrated the conservative sentiment of Boston. Abolition was too rash and rude for him, but his services to culture were outranked by none.

Since the outbreak of the Civil War, American oratory has seemed to moderate its tone. The fervid and sonorous periods of Webster now strike a little strangely on the ear. Stern strife and loyal death put the eloquence of mere words to shame. The flawless sublimity of Lincoln's Gettysburg address comes not merely from its concentrated truth, its crystal clarity, its involuntary rhythm of emotion, the moral intensity of every syllable, but from the silence of that sleeping battle-host. The Scriptural cadences of the Second Inaugural are weighted with a nation's agony and upborne upon a nation's faith.

The poetic plainness of Lincoln suggests a kindred

quality of simplicity in the greatest of our recent pulpit orators, PHILLIPS BROOKS, the beloved Bishop of Massachusetts; but far different from Lincoln's terseness was the rushing impetuosity of that strong pleading which not the walls of Trinity nor of any church or sect could bound. Eloquence becomes rarer as themes grow more intricate. In the complicated problems of finance and economics that have increasingly engaged public attention since the War, even the fervor of Wendell Phillips but beat the air. The judgment of the specialist carries further in politics to-day than oratorical passion. But although the apparatus of theological scholarship is more elaborate than ever before, Phillips Brooks made an avenue for sacred oratory by appealing purely to the spiritual consciousness and the primal faiths of man.

VI. **Studies in Nature.** — From the day of Franklin, natural science has had its American devotees, usually dependent upon academic appointments for a subsistence. Yale boasts its Sillimans, Amherst its Hitchcocks, Vassar its Maria Mitchell, Harvard its Shaler, Scudder, and Gray. But although there were many isolated workers, a significantly large proportion being of foreign birth, the general public was apathetic. Even the colleges treated the subject cavalierly, as in Columbia's appointing Dr. Mitchell to a roomy chair of chemistry, natural history, and philosophy. In "practical" discoveries or inventions, as ether, the telegraph and telephone, the applications of steam and electricity, America has

shown herself shrewdly interested, but, until the advent of Agassiz, of science for truth's sake the country at large knew little and cared less. How great were the obstacles which this popular indifference put in the way of independent investigators is seen in the case of our two ornithologists, Wilson, a native of Scotland, and Audubon, whose father was a Frenchman. The Scotch naturalist, seeking subscriptions for his *American Ornithology*, with its nine folio volumes and many colored plates, was frankly told by the governor of New York: "I would not give a hundred dollars for all the birds you intend to describe, even if I had them alive," while a Pennsylvania judge rebuked him for producing a book so costly as to be beyond "the reach of the commonalty and therefore inconsistent with our republican institutions." Audubon fared rather better, although his Cincinnati neighbors shook their heads over his woodland wanderings, and in Philadelphia and New York, where he sought patronage for his magnificent work, his reception left him "clouded and depressed," feeling himself "strange to all but the birds of America." But Agassiz, arriving in Boston close upon the middle of the century, did for science what Longfellow was doing for poetry,—made it the possession of the people. The devout son of a Swiss pastor, opening his summer school at Penikese with prayer, he gained American confidence so fully that the descendants of the Puritans hearkened willingly to his strong saying: "Philosophers and theologians have still to learn that a physical fact is as sacred as a moral

principle." The great naturalist was a still greater teacher and, in science as in philosophy, teaching has been the first need of our democracy. For a quarter-century Agassiz dwelt among us, and never was man more cordial, dominant, inspiring, irresistible, setting all the world to work, drawing, like a magnet, thousands of dollars out of private pockets and state treasuries, fairly radiating scientific enthusiasm. Another famous Swiss, Guyot, the geologist and geographer, followed him to America and continued his mission.

Contemporary with the labors of Agassiz were the recreations of our "poet-naturalist." Some thirty years after Bryant had first brought the American aspects of nature into verse, HENRY DAVID THOREAU made them at home in prose. They had not absolutely escaped mention, even in Colonial times. A few of the pioneers, especially the vigilant Wood and the credulous Josselyn, had essayed nature description, and a French immigrant of the Revolutionary period, Saint John de Crèvecœur, recorded in his *Letters from an American Farmer* sympathetic observations of birds and bees and yellow wasps. The charm of these letters, which ought to be reprinted, is akin to the charm that our own day loves in the writing of such nature-intimates as William Hamilton Gibson, Wilson Flagg, Frank Bolles, Maurice Thompson, Bradford Torrey, Olive Thorne Miller. But who of these ever kept as a parlor ornament a nest of buzzing hornets, that reciprocated the courtesy by catching the household flies, even off the children's eyelids?

Henry D. Thoreau.

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Pictures of forest, lake, and ocean form one of the lasting attractions of Cooper's novels, and sketches of New England country scenes, hardly less wild and strange, relieve with touches of quiet beauty the transcendental rhapsodies of Sylvester Judd's *Margaret;* but nature is Thoreau's staple. The "hermit of Walden" was not posing. He dwelt among the pines by Walden Pond because he had need of solitude in preparation for his life-task of authorship. "How can we expect a harvest of thought," he asked, "who have not had a seed-time of character?" It is often asserted that Thoreau withdrew into his mimic wilderness as a protest against civilization or from surly motives of misanthropy, but his own words bear no such statements out: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear." Born in Concord, and graduated at Harvard, he had taught, acquired proficiency in the family trade of pencil-making, and learned surveying, so that the ordinary paths to the ordinary ends were well open before him; but he counted the life more than meat. That young mind, which Emerson found so "free and erect," needed to get away for a season, even from Emerson himself, to realize its own quality and function. "Know your own bone," he said, "gnaw at it, bury it, unearth it, and gnaw it still. . . . In what concerns you much, do not think that you have com-

panions: know that you are alone in the world." On a wood-lot belonging to Emerson, close by Walden Pond, the young Transcendentalist, by aid of Alcott's best axe, built himself a hut, which cost him, all told, twenty-eight dollars. He took possession on Independence Day, and lived there two years, after which he returned to the village for the remaining fourteen years of his life. In point of fact, however, he was not a recluse at Walden. He strolled into Concord every other afternoon or so, and kept in his sylvan hermitage open house for all who passed his way. He was sometimes annoyed by the inquisitive, but had an unfeigned welcome for "children come a-berrying, railroad men taking a Sunday morning walk in clean shirts, fishermen and hunters, poets and philosophers; in short, all honest pilgrims, who came out to the woods for freedom's sake, and really left the village and town behind." Nor did he lack other companions. Phœbes built in his shed, and robins in the pines that brushed his outer wall, even the shy partridge fearlessly clucked her brood past his window, the mouse that lived under the floor ate from his finger, and a squirrel fell so in love with him that he had to take it in as a permanent boarder. The wood-birds would perch upon his shoulder or upon the spade with which he tilled his precious bean-patch. He could pull a woodchuck from its hole, or lift a fish from the water in his hand. Shortly after forsaking this happy retreat, Thoreau, who had been one of the *Dial* contributors, published *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers*, the record of a trip that he

had taken, long before going to Walden, with his brother John in a boat of their own building. This brother had since died, and much fault has been found with poor Thoreau for his sad little attempt to show the world and Emerson what an admirable stoic he was. "I do not wish to see John ever again," he said, but twelve years after his brother's death he turned pale and faint in speaking of it. This initial book, mystical in tone and abrupt in style, did not take with the public. Of the thousand copies, which formed the first edition, scarcely more than two hundred were sold. Seventy-five were given away, and the rest sent back to the author, who tugged them upstairs on his back, and observed stout-heartedly: "I have now a library of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself." *Walden*, describing his experiment in simplified life, sold better, but the other volumes, *Excursions*, *The Maine Woods*, *Cape Cod*, *A Yankee in Canada*, *Early Spring in Massachusetts*, *Summer*, *Winter*, *Autumn*, *Miscellanies*, have been printed since his death, edited by his friends from his journals. These books reveal at once the versatile Yankee, with his French extraction, proud of his frugality and skill in handicrafts; the out-of-door naturalist, stealthy of tread and Indian-keen of sense; and the brooding mystic, to whom this world, with all its multiform detail, is but a spiritual enigma that men are here to read. And when, again, Thoreau writes of mountains "washed in air" or the blue-bird carrying "the sky on his back" or the meadow

"bespattered with melody" of bobolinks, he is no better than a poet.

Thoreau, "sad as a pine-tree," not only lived with Nature, and kept a day-by-day record of her, but he is strangely akin to her. He shared her wildness and roughness, her austerity and asperity, the purity and chill of her New England snows that slew him in his prime. What he called "the sours and bitters of Nature" were in his blood. "From the forest and wilderness," he said, "come the tonics and barks which brace mankind." With his deep-set gray eyes under the shaggy brows, his beak-like nose, his wary glance, his swinging gait, his weather-stained garb, he was a man to note, if only for that "ugliness" which Hawthorne liked in Thoreau, as becoming him "much better than beauty." He was a pronounced individualist, refusing to pay taxes to a government that sustained slavery, eulogizing John Brown, holding aloof from the church. The D.D.'s whose opinion he valued most, he said, were chickadee-dees. "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears." Like Emerson, like Whitman, Thoreau proclaimed the joy of life. "I love my fate to the core and rind," he cried, and well he might, for obscure and harsh though it seemed to be, it held the ideal prizes: "If the day and night are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet-scented herbs — is more elastic, starry, immortal — that is your success."

Thoreau is still the Only. Not the best of his disciples, not John Burroughs, can reach his upper notes. But this is an ungracious way of recognizing our debt to "John of Birds," whose cheery essays have illuminated farm-lot and roadside tangle. He holds, too, a clearer mirror up to nature. The one canon of Thoreau's literary art, the end and aim of all that ceaseless note-taking and journal-keeping, was to speak the truth, but he saw natural phenomena with eyes that searched beyond, and he reported, after all, less of this world than of the other. Burroughs is a plainer man, who takes warblers and hemlocks at their surface value and makes literature out of a cow.

# CHAPTER VI

## NATIONAL ERA: PROSE FICTION

A novel is in its broadest definition a personal impression of life.
— HENRY JAMES, *The Art of Fiction.*

I. **Adventure.** — The regular function of a novel is to tell a story, but there are various kinds of stories and various ways of telling them. The tellers, too, have various objects in view. American fiction of the present century illustrates the most important of these varieties. At the outset stands the strong and clumsy figure of JAMES FENIMORE COOPER, whose novels are bold, stirring narratives of adventure on sea and land. They differ from the morbid books of Cooper's predecessor, Charles Brockden Brown, as health differs from disease. "When have I known," asked the young consumptive, "that lightness and vivacity of mind which . . . health . . . produces in men? Never . . . longer than half an hour at a time since I was a man." Cooper, on the other hand, was as robust as sun and wind could make him. His boyhood was passed on the borders of the wilderness. His father, Judge Cooper, a man of energy and resource, had secured, soon after the Revolution, a great estate, embracing thousands of acres, on Otsego Lake in New York. His first survey of his "patent," in

J. Fenimore Cooper

1785, is made vivid by Judge Temple of *The Pioneers*, in a passage that may serve to illustrate Cooper's slow and rich descriptive manner. "I left my party, the morning of my arrival, near the farms of the Cherry Valley, and, following a deer-path, rode to the summit of the mountain that I have since called Mount Vision; for the sight that there met my eyes seemed to me as the deceptions of a dream. The fire had run over the pinnacle, and, in a great measure, laid open the view. The leaves were fallen, and I mounted a tree, and sat for an hour looking on the silent wilderness. Not an opening was to be seen in the boundless forest, except where the lake lay, like a mirror of glass. The water was covered by myriads of the wild-fowl that migrate with the changes in the season; and, while in my situation on the branch of the beech, I saw a bear, with her cubs, descend to the shore to drink. I had met many deer, gliding through the woods, in my journey; but not the vestige of a man could I trace during my progress, nor from my elevated observatory. No clearing, no hut, none of the winding roads that are now to be seen, were there; nothing but mountains rising behind mountains; and the valley, with its surface of branches, enlivened here and there with the faded foliage of some tree, that parted from its leaves with more than ordinary reluctance. Even the Susquehanna was then hid, by the height and density of the forest."

Five years later, Judge Cooper had made in this solitude a habitable spot for his family and brought them

thither. The future novelist was then a year-old baby, born in Burlington, New Jersey, and for a brief boyhood he was free to revel in the rough, venturesome, out-of-door life of the settlement, drinking deep, meanwhile, of the solemn beauty of the forest. All too soon he was banished from this boy's paradise and sent to Albany, where he fitted for college with a runaway English cleric, whose classics were so good that Cooper entered Yale at thirteen. Here he roamed the countryside instead of studying, and, for some unlucky escapade, was dismissed in his junior year. Judge Cooper, then in Congress, decided to place him in the navy. As the custom was, Cooper learned to be a sailor by shipping before the mast on a merchantman. He sailed from New York to London and Gibraltar and home again, being much favored, for literary purposes, in several Atlantic storms. After this apprenticeship

"In cradle of the rude, imperious surge,"

he became, at eighteen, a midshipman. There was no war on hand, doubtless to his disappointment, but he added to his knowledge of wild nature by passing a winter on the remote shores of Lake Ontario, where he helped in the building of a naval vessel, and by visiting Niagara Falls. At twenty-one he fell in love, married, and resigned his commission. Absorbed in domestic happiness, rearing his children, and farming it in gentlemanly fashion, he had attained the age of thirty without symptoms of authorship, when one of

those beings usually designated by him as "drooping females" projected him by a quiet remark upon his famous career. To young Mrs. Cooper, unquestionably a "beauteous and breathing model of her sex," he was reading aloud, one day, an English society novel. When he flung it down with the natural remark, "I believe I could write a better story myself," the wife quite as naturally responded that she would like to see him do it, or words to that effect. Cooper's temper was never of the sort to "take a dare," and at this he promptly penned a two-volume novel entitled *Precaution*. This is a wearisome story of high life in England. Cooper knew nothing about English society from personal observation, but he modelled his writing on his reading. A number of fashionable and generally insipid people wind in and out the devious ways of courtship, but the interest, so far as there is any, centres in the faultless daughter of a baronet, wooed by a disguised earl, the lady falling "senseless on the sofa" at the disclosure of her lover's rank. The title is justified through the exertions of a universal chaperon, who labors "under the disadvantage of a didactic manner" and is inveterately warning her charges to hold their hearts in leash and not consent to marry without complete assurance of the moral and religious excellence of their suitors. Absurd enough in itself, *Precaution* seems especially ill-adapted to an American public, but the poverty of our literature was then such that novel-readers expected English situations and English characters as a matter of

course. Cooper even published his book anonymously that it might be the better received as supposedly of English authorship.

This first venture was hardly a success, but now that he had tasted ink, Cooper could not cease. *Precaution* had been published in the autumn of 1820. A year later appeared *The Spy*,— an American story of Revolutionary date, with the scene laid in Westchester County of New York, where Cooper had made his home. This was hot ground in the war time, British troops and Continentals sweeping back and forth over the blood-stained soil. The main action takes place at the homestead of a distressed neutral, whose son wears the King's uniform, and whose two daughters color their politics after their lovers' coats, one red, one buff. In this novel the "aged black," on whom Cooper's domestic machinery seems so dependent, begins his ministrations. In addition to much exciting and chivalric incident, there is the interest of a mystery enfolding two prominent characters, of whom one, a solemn stalking personage, is Washington in disguise, and the other is the peddler, Harvey Birch, in Washington's secret service. Such devoted agents had not been wanting to the patriot cause, and from the tradition of one of these Cooper portrayed his Spy. This novel had an unprecedented sale in America, was approved in England, and so rapturously hailed in France that its fame went abroad over all Europe, even Persia having a translation. Cooper now set about story-telling in earnest. Next came *The Pioneers*, dealing with the scenes of his boyhood. The

public expectation had run so high that thirty-five hundred copies were sold in the first half-day. The book is overladen with description, — pictures of the riches of lake and forest in those prodigal times, when bass were netted by the shoal and pigeons shot with cannon for their multitude. Novel-readers, missing their accustomed diet of dukes and diadems, denounced the book as vulgar, with its commonplace incidents and lowly characters. Incidents and characters came from Cooper's deepest recollections, — the sugaring off, the shooting-match for the Christmas turkey, the panther, the forest fire, the border jumble of New Yorkers, Yankees, Frenchmen, Germans, Welshmen, negroes, Indians. But the mongrel dialect of these worthies, who talk interminably, is vexatious, and the story, turning on a mysterious youth with a mysterious grievance, drags. There is a seeming anomaly here, for this book, genuine piece of realism though it is, stands also as the forerunner in that unique series of frontier romances known as the Leather-Stocking Tales. Romance has been defined as the union of the strange with the beautiful, but all that forest atmosphere so familiar to Cooper was a surprise to Europe. The effect even of his realism was romantic. In his later Indian stories, however, he garnished these memories of boyhood with imaginary exploits and adventures of the most startling sort. His wild-life characters are at a disadvantage in *The Pioneers*. Indian John is a drunken old savage, with gleams of nobler memory, and Natty Bumppo, or Leather-Stocking, is a grizzled, homely-spoken

backwoodsman, whose distinguishing traits are a good aim and a good heart, a shrinking from the advancing tide of civilization, and a craving for the further wilderness.

Cooper had now broken ground successfully in the Revolutionary novel and the romance of pioneer life. His next book conquered for him the third and last of his peculiar domains. The authorship of the Waverley novels was still under discussion, although Scott was generally suspected; but *The Pirate*, some one claimed in Cooper's presence, could not have been written by a landsman. Cooper maintained, on the contrary, that the story, cleverly done though it was, lacked the true nautical flavor. To show how much more vivid might be a sea-yarn spun by a sailor, he wrote *The Pilot*. This captured the *Edinburgh Review*, which, though protesting against the tedious detail, pronounced the book original and a masterpiece. The Pilot is Paul Jones, who, hugging a haughty melancholy, furnishes the indispensable mystery, but he is far less attractive, with his alternations of "cool asperity" and "convulsive grasp," than the staunch old pea-jacket, Long Tom Coffin. The story "blows fresh," and to read it is almost as good as a voyage.

Cooper wrote twenty-eight novels more. Four of these, *The Deerslayer*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Pathfinder*, and *The Prairie*, make up with *The Pioneers*, whose place, in the order of events, is fourth, the Leather-Stocking group. In the first, Natty Bumppo is a moralizing youth, standing six feet in his moccasins, and cracking miraculous shots. His brother-in-arms, the

young Mohican chief, Chingachgook, makes picturesque poses with his arch and tender Wah!-ta!-Wah! The second tale, most rapid and thrilling of all, has for hero the Last of the Mohicans, Uncas, son of Chingachgook. This young brave is a sheer knight-errant, always "flying with instinctive delicacy to the assistance of the females." Honest Bumppo wears here the sobriquet of Hawk's-eye, and is left, at the close of the book, clasping hands with the bereaved Chingachgook over the grave of Uncas, which they water with "scalding tears." The scene of *The Pathfinder* is laid on Lake Ontario, and abundant opportunity is given for the display of Cooper's woodcraft and watercraft, although Mark Twain cavils at both. Here Bumppo falls in love, but again the story leaves him with tears "rolling out of the fountains of feeling," as he generously relinquishes the sergeant's daughter to a younger suitor and goes his bachelor way to the faithful Chingachgook. In *The Pioneers* we witness the heathen death of the old Mohican, degraded by civilization to Indian John, and in *The Prairie* the Christian death of the trapper himself. This volume is the most poetical of the series, showing Leather-Stocking, an aged, solitary figure, on the wide plains beyond the Mississippi, ever wandering westward in a vain attempt to escape "the din of the settlements."

Cooper's other Indian romances resemble these, but flow less freely. *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish* depicts a family of Connecticut Puritans, who, besieged in a blazing blockhouse by murderous Narragansetts, come out

of their plight not much the worse. *Wyandotte* recounts the troubles of an isolated household on the New York frontier, betrayed to the savages by a nasal Yankee. The central Indian of the story stabs the master of the household in revenge for a flogging thirty years old, but, ten years later, converted and penitent, dies on his victim's grave. *Oak Openings* goes further yet and converts the terrible Scalping Peter, chief of an Indian confederacy, at the martyrdom of a Methodist missionary, Parson Amen. Indians figure, too, in the trio of political novels, *Satanstoe*, *Chainbearer*, and *Redskins*, which go to uphold the patroon rights of the great landowners against the anti-rent agitation. The first is the autobiography of Corny Littlepage, who, after divers entertaining experiences in the old Knickerbocker society of New York and Albany, endured some sharp encounters with the Hurons in visiting his wilderness grants. The second, less successful, comes supposedly from the hand of his son, who found the squatters on those estates little disposed to admit his landlordship. In the third, polemical and almost without story, are depicted the perplexities of the latest heir, a gilded and travelled youth, who threatens darkly, if American law will not protect him in the enjoyment of his ancestral wealth, to go and live in Europe. The Indian element is comparatively slight in these anti-rent novels, yet so far as the redmen appear, they suggest those magnanimous qualities so freely lavished by Cooper upon the forest chivalry of his Leather-Stocking Tales. This roseate view of

Indian character has provoked criticism. Uncas has hardly found credence. "Pooh, pooh!" as one of Cooper's own borderers said, "this is much too sentimental for your Mohawks, and Oneidas, and Onondagoes, and Tuscaroras." In contrast, Paulding's *Koningsmarke*, a tale of the Delaware Swedes, paints the Indians as hideous and silly brutes, and Bird's *Nick of the Woods* takes for hero, not one of the scalping savages, but their relentless murderer, the Jibbenainosay, maddened avenger of his ruined home. The yellow crop of dime novels has followed Bird and Paulding rather than Cooper, but Mrs. Jackson's *Ramona* presents the nobler view.

*The Pilot* led Cooper's line of spirited sea-stories. The ever-popular *Red Rover*, with its romantic buccaneer, and well-exploded train of surprises; the *Water-Witch*, with its fantastic smuggler and sea-green sorceress; *Wing-and-Wing*, with its gallant French corsair; *The Two Admirals*, with its splendid sea-fight and that manly friendship which held a tempted spirit true; *Afloat and Ashore*, with its unforgettable figures of the wily South American savages; its continuation, *Miles Wallingford; Jack Tier*, with its queer quintette clinging to the keel of a capsized schooner that settles with every hour down nearer to the impatient sharks; *The Crater*, with its new Robinson Crusoe and its insecure Utopia founded on a volcano; *The Sea-Lions*, with its whaling and sealing, pirate gold and Antarctic ice, all have variety and hazard and genuine

ocean charm. *Mercedes of Castile*, too, depicts the eventful cruise of Columbus, and *Homeward Bound* is the narrative of an Atlantic voyage. Cooper outgoes all American competitors in extravagant fabrications of salt-water adventure. Herman Melville's South Sea stories are more direct and convincing, his *Typee*, especially, having the realistic shudder of an author who barely escaped a dishing up for cannibals, but William Starbuck Mayo makes too extreme a claim upon credulity. Yet there is entertainment to be had out of his sensational and stilted *Kaloolah*, named from the Congo bride whom that dauntless adventurer, Jonathan Romer of Nantucket, rescued from slave-catchers in darkest Africa, and taught to speak English so fluently that she was soon alluding to the leafy branches overhead as "this umbrageous canopy."

What Cooper could do was action. Psychology was out of his range. Attempting to follow up the success of *The Spy* by another Revolutionary novel, he wrote *Lionel Lincoln*, located at Boston in the glorious days of Lexington and Bunker Hill, but instead of laying his stress on military manœuvres and soldierly heroism, Cooper tried, by dint of an idiot, a maniac, and two sin-tortured women, to construct a tragedy of secret guilt. At such Hawthornesque business he showed himself but a bungler. The poet Dana and the painter Allston could do better, one with the furious passions of *Tom Thornton* and *Paul Felton*, and the other with the melodramatic *Monaldi*. The Revolutionary romances of Cooper

stopped abruptly with the unfortunate *Lionel Lincoln*, but, in the South, Simms and Kennedy and John Esten Cooke took up the theme. The place of Simms, the veteran in southern letters, is at once honorable and pathetic. Striving against wind and tide, he produced as many stories as Cooper, besides a goodly amount of poetry, biography, and miscellany; but the bulk of his writing was too hasty for immortality. His *Yemassee*, a tale of the great Indian rising in early Carolina, challenged Cooper on his own ground, as did Kennedy's *Rob of the Bowl*, picturing the life of Colonial Maryland, and Cooke's *Fairfax*, a story of the Virginia border. In this figures Washington, as a lad of sixteen, together with a chivalric young redskin after Cooper's own heart, Lightfoot, son of War Eagle. Even better than these are the Revolutionary romances, Simms's *Partisan*, *Scout*, *Eutaw*, and others, Kennedy's *Horseshoe Robinson*, and Cooke's *Virginia Comedians*. This last is still an attractive and suggestive novel, for all its old-fashioned English and Byronesque lover, who at any trying moment "with passionate anger . . . grasped his breast, and dug his nails into the flesh, until they were stained with blood."

Cooper's Dutch-descended young heroes carry themselves more coolly under provocation, and it would have been well for their author, had he emulated them in this respect. He had a stormy temper, from which apparently his household did not suffer, as his domestic affections were of the warmest, but which was continually

bringing him into collision with the public. Naturally a stiff conservative and even, in a bluff, generous fashion, an aristocrat, his ardent patriotism led him, during a long foreign residence, to exalt democracy, for the edification of Europe, in a series of three novels, *The Bravo*, located in Venice, *Heidenmauer*, on the Rhine, and *The Headsman*, among the Alps. These plunged him into newspaper controversy, in which he vaunted the republican institutions of his native land, but returning to America, after an absence of seven years, he found his country cruder and more strident than he remembered it and absorbed in business enterprise. This landed proprietor, who had inherited the large Cooperstown estate, where he henceforth made his home, had little sympathy with the Wall Street spirit. As he had upbraided Europe for failing to admire America, he now proceeded to scold America about the traits that he disliked. His charges were often true, but his manner of preferring them, blunt at the outset, grew more and more offensive. In addition to outspoken newspaper criticism, he tried to satirize the nation in a semi-allegorical novel, *The Monikins*, but his hand was too heavy for such cunning work. A quarrel with his neighbors over the right to a tongue of picnic-ground called out a more directly abusive novel, *Home as Found*, sequel to *Homeward Bound*. The national vanity smarted, and the newspapers, by way of argument, called the critic names. He retorted, most unexpectedly, by bringing a succession of libel suits, until he had actually cowed the American press. In

those years, Cooper, in Elizabethan phrase, walked "up and down like a charged musket." Even his sea-stories grew more and more polemical, pirates and ice-floes being kept waiting on the expression of his personal prejudices against Yankee deacons, Albany legislators, editors, and Unitarians. His last novel, *The Ways of the Hour*, attacks the system of trial by jury.

Cooper died in 1851, having written in the latter half of his life thirty-two novels, five volumes of naval history and biography, ten volumes of travels and sketches, and a countless number of newspaper columns. Much as his intemperate wrath had impaired his personal popularity and injured the literary quality of his later work, the best of his romances — the Leather-Stocking series, *The Spy*, *The Pilot*, *The Red Rover* — keep up a steady sale. There are boys yet who turn from the instructive Rollo Books and Bodley Books, and even from the entertaining pages of "Oliver Optic," John T. Trowbridge, and Howard Pyle, to enjoy starving on a raft or burning at a stake with Cooper. His tales yield a pleasure akin to that of physical motion. Like Scott, he may be slow in getting under way, but, once started, there is a forest trail to follow or a windy sea to sail. He loved nature and nature's children, — the backwoodsman, the Indian, the tar. His well-bred characters are healthy, comely, and good, but not interesting. His heroines have been called "sticks of barley candy," and his heroes, true to Yale tradition, are athletic. The reader feels comfortably sure, at the outset of a

story, that Strength and Sweetness will wed in the last chapter, but not until a profusion of deadly perils shall have been sprung upon them and the most unlikely people discovered to be their blood-relations. The plot may be careless, the mystery stale, the hazards absurdly unnecessary, the escapes incredible, the syntax and diction faulty, but the story carries by its candid appeal to excitement, curiosity, and the joy of out-of-doors. The novels of Cooper's grand-niece, Constance Fenimore Woolson, suggest his vigorous hand, but with added subtlety lose in strength, and with a more delicate art miss the broad and sweeping effects that make for popular fame.

II. **Humor and Pathos.** — The romance of adventure hurries on from one exciting event to another, but there is a quieter fiction, which loves to dwell, with smiles and tears, on situations of a simple sort. Of this our first American creator is WASHINGTON IRVING, whose literary activity began some thirteen years before Cooper's.

When the English took New Netherlands, Fort Orange became Albany, and New Amsterdam became New York, but Dutch manners and customs long prevailed in the conquered colony, giving a unique and mellow coloring to the life along the Hudson. In Colonial times, it was a land picturesque with wind-mills and canals, yellow-brick gables, tiled roofs, and oddly-devised weather-cocks. Albany was the centre of the fur-trade, but the New York streets, bordered by the well-scoured stoops on which rotund burgomasters smoked the evening pipe, already gave forth the sounds of a keen and varied traffic.

Even in 1783, when Irving was born, his native city still kept much of the quaint Dutch aspect. This the lad enjoyed, as he enjoyed everything, although his father, a Scotchman and a Presbyterian deacon, was not disposed to further his talent for amusement. Irving's boyish morals betrayed, indeed, a New York laxity, for the story goes that he would read in school *Robinson Crusoe* and *Sinbad the Sailor* instead of his arithmetic and then bargain with some matter-of-fact fellow to do his sums for him in trade for a composition. He was a hardened theatre-goer, too, slipping away after supper without his father's knowledge, running home for family prayers at nine o'clock, just at the crisis of the play, bidding a decorous good-night to the household and retiring meekly to his room, only to slip out of his window and down the roof, and dash for the last act. His gentle English mother may have sighed over the unpressed pillow, but he was her youngest and of fragile build. Moreover, how could a boy named after Washington come to any harm? So he appears to have had life much his own merry way, roaming about the Hudson River region and dancing in gay cities, while his elder brothers were at their studies in Columbia College. At sixteen, this ill-schooled stripling entered a law-office, where he spent his time agreeably in reading the English novelists and poets. Now and then he sent an Addisonian sketch, lightly satiric, over the signature of Jonathan Oldstyle, to the *Morning Chronicle*, a daily newspaper which his brother Peter had just ventured.

At twenty-one his health was so delicate that his brothers affectionately insisted on giving him a trip abroad. His blithe disposition made him an excellent traveller, his personal graces admitted him to select salons and balls and dinner-tables, and all his æsthetic tastes and tendencies gathered strength from the Old World atmosphere. After two years of delightful idling, he returned home and was admitted to the bar, but society was more to his mind. This young Prince Charming, with his foreign aroma and leisurely, pleasure-loving ways, was welcome wherever he went. He amused himself with wine suppers in New York and with belles in Baltimore, and, as a minor diversion, with the *Salmagundi* papers. His eldest brother, William Irving, and his friend from boyhood, James K. Paulding, joined with him in the publication of this little fortnightly, modelled on the *Spectator* and undertaking to "present a striking picture of the town." Its airy nonchalance was made evident in the opening sentences of the first number: "As everybody knows, or ought to know, what a Salmagund is, we shall spare ourselves the trouble of an explanation; besides, we despise trouble as we do everything low and mean, and hold the man who would incur it unnecessarily as an object worthy our highest pity and contempt. Neither will we puzzle our heads to give an account of ourselves, for two reasons: first, because it is nobody's business; secondly, because if it were, we do not hold ourselves bound to attend to anybody's

business but our own; and even *that* we take the liberty of neglecting, when it suits our inclination." Consistently with this closing sentiment, the happy-go-lucky young editors, who tickled the public curiosity with their pen-names and sly hints, having issued twenty numbers with much applause and finding themselves on the verge of a financial success, threw *Salmagundi* over and looked about for a new jest.

This was speedily forthcoming. Dr. Mitchell of the New York Historical Society had published a somewhat pompous and pedantic *Picture of New York.* Irving and his brother Peter thought it would be great fun to parody this production, but business called Peter to Europe, so that their plan was carried out by the arch-rogue alone. The book, published when Irving was twenty-six years old, is admirable fooling. It purports to be printed from a blotted manuscript left at a New York inn by an impecunious lodger, a touchy and inquisitive old body answering to the name of Dietrich Knickerbocker. An unsuspicious public sat gravely down to read the "history of New York from the beginning of the world to the end of the Dutch dynasty," but opened eyes wider and wider over the animated accounts of the three Dutch governors of New Amsterdam, — Walter the Doubter, "exactly five feet six inches in height and six feet five inches in circumference," whose "habits were as regular as his person," for "he daily took his four stated meals, appropriating exactly an hour to each; he smoked and

doubted eight hours, and he slept the remaining twelve;" William the Testy, "a brisk, wiry, waspish little old gentleman," whose "cheeks were scorched into a dusky red, by two fiery little gray eyes," whose nose turned up and the corners of whose mouth turned down "pretty much like the muzzle of an irritable pug-dog;" and Peter the Headstrong, with his resplendent wooden leg mounted with silver and his "brimstone-colored breeches . . . glaring in the sunbeams." The Yankees appear to small advantage as a "guessing, questioning, swapping, pumpkin-eating, molasses-daubing, shingle-splitting, cider-watering, horse-jockeying, notion-peddling crew," who fight under the standard of a dried codfish: but the jocund satire spends itself mainly upon the smoke-enveloped figures of the fat Dutch burghers. The outraged descendants of the "waddling . . . chivalry of the Hudson" did not easily forgive Irving for his caricature, but the book made him famous at home and called attention abroad to "American humor." As a sample of that national ware, the *Knickerbocker History of New York* is more truly representative than the absurdities of "Sam Slick" and "Major Jack Downing," "Mrs. Partington," "Josh Billings," "Josiah Allen's Wife" and the "funny-man" rank and file. Our western jokes may be big and broad as the prairies, but this "Munchausen vein of exaggeration run mad" is promptly foiled, so prone are Americans to scoff at their own boasts, by a whimsical twist that brings one up against a blank wall of surprise.

The man who was so strong that his shadow, falling on a child, killed it, is own cousin to the man who was so tall that he had to climb a ladder to shave himself. The peculiar dryness especially characteristic of Yankee drollery is better illustrated from Franklin's shrewd proverbs than from Irving's spontaneous and sparkling descriptions, but the extravagance, mock gravity, and republican irreverence which belong to American humor are here. Irving pulls as long a face as ever did that dear delight of lecture-halls, "Artemus Ward," whether the make-believe historian is recounting how a sunbeam, falling on the ruby nose of Antony the Trumpeter, as he leaned over the ship's side, "shot straightway down, hissing hot, into the water, and killed a mighty sturgeon that was sporting beside the vessel," or whether he is most sacrilegiously chanting the battle of Fort Christina, from that epic moment when "the immortal deities, who whilom had seen service at the 'affair' of Troy — now mounted their feather-bed clouds and sailed over the plain," to the glorious hour when "Victory, in the likeness of a gigantic ox-fly, sat perched upon the cocked hat of the gallant Stuyvesant." The book is not only a literary burlesque, like Robert Grant's *Little Tin Gods on Wheels*, but it is as complete a hoax as Aldrich's *Marjorie Daw*. Irving has not, in as high a degree, at least, as the irrepressible "Mark Twain," the genius for the unexpected, he is not so trenchant as Lowell nor so verbally adroit as Holmes, but he is as true a

humorist as any one of these. That gracious quality in personality, that "mixture of love and wit," that keen perception, so alert in Lincoln even when life was at its saddest, of the essential incongruity in mortal things, is Irving's. In this first book, the spectacle of human blundering was playfully presented and mirthfully surveyed, but clearly there was needed only a little shifting of the scene, a little softening of the tone, to yield, instead of humor, the allied effect of pathos.

Before the *History of New York* was quite completed, the death of his betrothed, a gentle girl of seventeen, gave to Irving's mind the pensive cast which was peculiarly acceptable to the frank sensibilities of his day and generation. If he did not cherish his grief, at least it cherished him. His book brought him fame and money, and he lounged away a few years more in America and Europe gracefully enough, but the first boyish brightness had suffered change. "The career of gayety and notoriety," he wrote, "soon palled on me. I seemed to drift about without aim or object, at the mercy of every breeze; my heart wanted anchorage. I was naturally susceptible, and tried to form other attachments, but my heart would not hold on; it would continually recur to what it had lost; and whenever there was a pause in the hurry of novelty and excitement, I would sink into dismal dejection. For years I could not talk on the subject of this hopeless regret; I could not even mention her name; but her image was

continually before me, and I dreamt of her incessantly." The War of 1812, with its attendant hard times, stirred him to a fitful energy. The Irving property was in the hardware business, and as one mercantile house failed after another, he took up his pen more resolutely and tried to conduct a magazine, but soon revolted from the drudgery of stated tasks. He was in England, a man of thirty-five, when "Irving Brothers," after a long struggle, went down. Anxious as he was to come to the family relief, he had to do it in his own way. He refused an editorial salary of a thousand guineas, from dislike both of politics and routine, and put aside flattering offers from the *London Quarterly*, because its attitude toward America had been unfriendly. What he could do was to write *The Sketch-Book*, and it was all-sufficient. "I seek," he had said, "only to blow a flute accompaniment in the national concert," but the clear, sweet notes sounded further than any American strain had as yet gone. The unbounded gratification of his country both touched and flurried the sensitive author. London, too, busy as the English were in reading Scott and Byron, loaded him with praises, which he did not take too seriously. "It has been a matter of marvel," he wrote, "to my European readers, that a man from the wilds of America should express himself in tolerable English. I was looked upon as something new and strange in literature; a kind of demi-savage, with a feather in his hand, instead of on his head."

Yet nothing could well be more elegant and urbane

than the varied contents of *The Sketch-Book*, — amiable musings, in pellucid, polished English, on *Westminster Abbey*, *Stratford-on-Avon*, *Rural Life in England*, sprightly accounts of the Christmas festivities in an English country-house, and miscellaneous sketches and tales often colored by "that kind of melancholy fancying, which has in it something sweeter even than pleasure." Byron shed tears over *The Broken Heart*, but *The Pride of the Village*, *The Widow and Her Son*, *Rural Funerals* are not less touching, if, indeed, the sensibilities do not spring to their guard against such deliberate and undisguised attack. Pathos is in literature an even more ticklish quality than humor. If much of our old-fashioned fun, including certain passages from the pen of Dietrich Knickerbocker, sounds to-day both coarse and silly, old-fashioned sentiment is likely to set one laughing. Irving, however, has the saving grace of pleasantness. He never forgets to entertain, even in a graveyard. Readers of these *Sketch-Book* reveries are constantly reminded of the author's own picture of himself reclining on a half-sunken tombstone in the shadow of an ivied Gothic church, taking example from the setting sun which "lit up all nature with a melancholy smile."

"Prue and her sex regard sentiment more than action," once said a dreamy old book-keeper who seldom said amiss, and it would seem to be true that the American women successful in fiction, from the rainy day of *The Wide, Wide World*, have depended in large degree on the pathetic. Adeline D. T. Whitney and

eminently Louisa Alcott have the secret of laughter as well as of tears, but their abiding charm for girlhood is less in the story told than in the tenderness of the telling. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE and ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS WARD abound in merriment, but the chances are against the reader who attempts to get through *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or *The Madonna of the Tubs* without a "cry." That sprightly chronicler, Kate Douglas Wiggin Riggs, often calls for the whisk of the handkerchief. Frances Hodgson Burnett plays on the softer emotions, and Margaret Deland, for all her insistence upon "problems," is not read for theories of theology and sociology, nor for chain of events, but for sympathetic pleasure and sympathetic pain.

*The Sketch-Book* contains the two immortal Hudson River legends, *Rip Van Winkle* and *Sleepy Hollow*, together with a German story. A second volume of delicate English sketches, entitled *Bracebridge Hall*, makes space for two love-tales, one of Spain and one of Normandy, and for more of the old Dutch traditions. A third volume, *Tales of a Traveller*, finally abandons essay for narrative. The most of these stories are European, but the best return to the haunted headlands of the Hudson. A sojourn of three years and more in Spain bore fruit not only in the *Life of Columbus*, *Companions of Columbus*, *Conquest of Granada*, and *Mahomet*, books in which historical material is presented with the grace and vivacity of fiction, but in that crowning work, the *Alhambra*, which glows with

the rich beauty of Spanish tradition. Of what is technically termed "local color" Irving was a master. *Bracebridge Hall* reflects the easy, abundant, cultivated life of an English country-seat as perfectly as the *Alhambra* catches the romantic impression of Spain, or the Hudson River legends hold the drowsy, gossipy, homely atmosphere of the old Dutch villages.

After an absence of seventeen years, Irving came again to his native land, where he was hailed as the lord of American letters. He made himself a home, well-named Sunnyside, at Tarrytown, on the banks of the Hudson, not far from Sleepy Hollow. The Dutch stone cottage, "modelled after the cocked hat of Peter the Headstrong," with a weather-cock perched on every gable, and a Melrose ivy overrunning the walls, was the shelter of loving nieces and the resort of literary pilgrims. Here he happily spent his remaining life, with the exception of four years passed in Madrid as Minister to Spain. Astonished and delighted by the swift expansion of America, he journeyed through the newly settled regions, garnering these experiences in *A Tour on the Prairies*. *Astoria* and *Captain Bonneville*, too, deal with the Far West, and an aftermath of sketches, collected under the name of *Wolfert's Roost*, treats in several instances of western themes. Lives of Goldsmith, with whose gay and gentle spirit Irving had always been in peculiar sympathy, and of Washington, who seventy years before had laid a hand of blessing on his head, worthily rounded out his literary labors.

Modest, kindly, and serene, he lived into ripeness of years, becoming, according to the occupant of Harper's *Easy Chair*, as "quaint a figure" as the old Dietrich himself. "He might have been seen on an autumnal afternoon tripping with an elastic step along Broadway, with 'low quartered' shoes neatly tied, and a Talma cloak, a short garment that hangs from the shoulders like the cape of a coat. There was a chirping, cheery, old-school air in his appearance which was undeniably Dutch, and most harmonious with the associations of his writing. He seemed, indeed, to have stepped out of his own books; and the cordial grace and humor of his address, if he stopped for a passing chat, were delightfully characteristic."

Until Irving's death, which befell at Sunnyside in 1859, there was little abatement in the praise. His sweetness and shyness disarmed criticism. He was, indeed, sometimes charged with lack of moral earnestness. Hazlitt called him "a mere filagree man." England complained, now and then, of his want of originality, in that his sketches, so exquisitely languaged, were like "patterns taken in silk paper" from the English classics. "He brought no new earth, no sprig of laurel gathered in the wilderness, no red bird's wing." Yet, in point of fact, the Hudson River legends, picturing weird lights and shadows on the quiet hills, and on the human life, as quiet, at their feet, were fresh in literature. Nor has Irving's charm yet faded, although the twinkle holds its own better than the tear. He is a delightful quiz, for

through all the badinage his manner keeps its winning courtesy. His style, with its rare clearness and finish, is so artistic that it seems artless. His is the golden touch by which the simplest things grow precious, like his Dutch tea-table whereon the goodies were "mingled higgledy-piggledy . . . with the motherly tea-pot sending up its cloud of vapor from the midst." As for story-telling, he merely sketches a situation charged with some romantic, humorous, or tender feeling, and then proceeds in leisurely fashion to make the most of it. His literary influence in America has been wide and varied, yet few of our authors are essentially akin to him. Paulding, at his best in *The Dutchman's Fireside*, had Irving's glee without his grace. Donald G. Mitchell, better known as "Ik Marvel," follows Irving, especially in *Reveries of a Bachelor* and *Dream Life*, but the unrelieved sentiment cloys. More truly of the Irving type, with a Brook Farm fervor added, was the distinguished editor, lecturer, and patriot, GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS. That shining soul, "loyal to whatever is generous and humane, full of sweet hope, and faith, and devotion," is radiant still in the jewel lights of *Prue and I*.

III. **Mystery and Terror.** — Working from the sketch, Irving achieved the tale. Intent as this narrator was on the mirth and sadness of life, the limits of the short story served him better, for an unbroken emotional impression, than the elaborated novel. Far more is brevity essential to that concentration of attention, that intensity of horror, dread, distress caused by the fictions of EDGAR ALLAN POE.

In his essay on *The Poetic Principle* Poe declared the phrase "a long poem" to be a contradiction in terms. Lyrist that he was, he maintained that the extent of a poem should be measured by the capability of the reader for a continuous rapture of response. "But all excitements are, through a psychal necessity, transient. That degree of excitement which would entitle a poem to be so called at all cannot be sustained throughout a composition of any great length. After the lapse of half an hour, at the very utmost, it flags — fails — a revulsion ensues — and then the poem is, in effect, and in fact, no longer such." This principle Poe consistently applied to his own poems and adapted to his tales, which, though longer indeed than his impassioned requiems, can be read at a single sitting, and allow the dominance of a single mood. Indeed, the mind could not long maintain the keenness of curiosity that they arouse, nor the heart endure their rack of fright and anguish.

Poe's first stroke of visible success was made with the tale *A Manuscript found in a Bottle*, which took a one-hundred-dollar prize in a newspaper story-competition. Ten years after, he won a second hundred-dollar prize with *The Gold-Bug*. His stories were printed in magazines and newspapers, especially in those of which he chanced to be editor. A volume entitled *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* was brought out by him in 1840, and another collection of his stories five years later. A survey of these fictions calls to mind, what the transcendent power of Poe's analytic and supernatural tales

often causes to be forgotten, the versatility of his narrative genius. *Arthur Gordon Pym* opens and proceeds with the realistic detail of a *Robinson Crusoe*, although no brain but Poe's could have conceived that climax of white horror. His extravaganzas are ingenious, and while the sweetness of humor was not his, such stories as *The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherazade* have a flavor of pleasantry that is not all sardonic. The bulk of Poe's fictions, however, fall under the two main headings of mystery and terror.

Poe's mind was a singular compound of poetry and mathematics. It was as true of him as of his Prince Prospero in *The Masque of the Red Death* that "his plans were bold and fiery, and his conceptions glowed with barbaric lustre. There are some who would have thought him mad." But side by side with his most delirious emotions and bizarre imaginations went an icy and precise reason. The secret cipher was as much his own as the opium ecstasy. He liked to ferret out a criminal case. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and *The Purloined Letter* well illustrate that cold, persistent logic of his detective stories. In his Monsieur Dupin we have the original of Sherlock Holmes. Anna Katharine Green Rohlfs, with her *Leavenworth Case*, is the foremost representative in America to-day of police-court fiction, but no successor has equalled Poe in dignifying by the severity of the intellectual process the sensational material belonging to this class of tales. A somewhat similar mental value attaches to Poe's stories of pseudo-

science, *Adventures of One Hans Pfaall, Descent into a Maelström*, and their like. His narrative moves with a serious deliberation and attention to detail that almost convinces the reader, especially as, upon the basal impossibility, a score of most accurately calculated probabilities are constructed. Jules Verne, in France, who has written a continuation of *Arthur Gordon Pym*, reproduces the method, as does our own Frank R. Stockton, whose preposterous hoaxes are developed with this same patient respect for the minutiæ of truth. All this play of thought in Poe connects with his restless craving for superhuman knowledge. He suggested once that the physical universe exists only to allay, while yet it baffles, this inherent longing of humanity. He had heard it "whispered in Aidenn" that "of this infinity of matter, the *sole* purpose is to afford infinite springs, at which the soul may allay the thirst *to know* which is forever unquenchable within it — since to quench it would be to extinguish the soul's self."

But Poe's curiosity has upon it something morbid and unholy. It haunts the realms of mesmerism, torture, pestilence, of epilepsy, catalepsy, and all mysterious diseases, it pries into the opium dream, the swoon, hysteria, delirium, insanity, it listens at the gate of the tomb for the awakening agonies of the prematurely buried, or peers in upon the gruesome processes of bodily decay. His heroines of the mellifluous names, Morella, Lygeia, have a strange, unlawful lore, even as they droop, with Madeline, Berenice, Rowena, Eleonora,

under weird and wasting illnesses. He not only conceives, as in the case of Roderick Usher, a maddening intensification of sense impressions, but advances the idea, active in modern French Symbolism, of an interchange among the functions of the senses, so that sights, for instance, should affect the brain as sounds. He broods upon the sensations of the dying and the dead, for he confounds the immortal with mortality and has the spirit vaguely conscious, through the ages, of its dark tenement, the grave. He crosses the dim borderland between the natural and supernatural, picturing wild tragedies of metempsychosis or, as in *Lygeia*, "a hideous drama of revivification," where "each agony wore the aspect of a struggle with some invisible foe." Allied to these elements of terror are all sinister passions, envy, suspicion, hate, revenge. Faces are "cadaverously wan," with "pale lips writhing," with eyes of "mad hilarity" or of a "glassy stare." Nature is spectral with "white trunks of decayed trees" and "yellow ghastly waters," or ominous with "lurid tarn" and "blood-red moon." The horrors come to pass within "gloomy, gray, hereditary walls," in chambers of "melancholy vaulting," of "gorgeous and fantastic draperies" and "Bedlam patterns" traced in "carpets of tufted gold," — unless, indeed, the desperate scene is laid in the catacombs of the Montresors or the dungeons of the Inquisition. Anxiety and dread are augmented by some external suggestion of mystery. There are shadowy nooks of the hall and sable recesses of the fretted ceiling that the eye vainly

tries to pierce; the figured tapestries are moved by uncanny winds or tremble to the vibration of strange music. Beyond the mystery is always a terror. These piteous characters, phantasms of humanity rather than actual men and women, are at the mercy of demoniac power. There is the sense of pursuit, of a lurking danger, of a watchful malice, of an irresistible doom.

> "Mimes, in the form of God on high,
> Mutter and mumble low,
> And hither and thither fly;
> Mere puppets they, who come and go
> At bidding of vast, formless things
> That shift the scenery to and fro,
> Flapping from out their condor wings
> Invisible Woe."

How much of all this was due to the alcohol and opium in Poe's blood no one would be more curious than himself to learn. It is nevertheless high art. The perfect correspondence between scene and deed, the unity of tone and color preserved throughout, the unswerving sweep to a climax, the significant selection of details, the controlled, distinct, and brilliant style, the Hebrew symmetry of structure, the concrete words surcharged with beauty and emotion, the solemn, thrilling cadences, the harmonious combination of syllables, the symbolism of the imagery, the concentration of the passion, all go to produce an overwhelming literary effect. His imagination was wonderfully fertile in varieties of illusion and mystification, and in surprises of fantasy, but there is a fine economy in his use of mate-

rials. Nothing is superfluous. The unsufferable horror proceeds, as in *The Tell-Tale Heart*, from a single circumstance. His problems are deceptively simple. His miracles are almost scientific. Yet while there is no vulgar lavishness of blood and ghosts, of detective machinery, of outcry and explanation, the interest throughout is held at highest pitch, until the strain threatens exhaustion. The influence of Coleridge, so discernible in Poe's lyrics, is potent upon the tales. Those bitter parables, Scriptural in sublimity of language, *Shadow*, where the seven feasters at the ebony board quaff the red Chian wine by the pallid light of the seven iron lamps, and *Silence*, the fable told by the Demon, who laughed and cursed in the cavity of the tomb, are attuned to Coleridge's prose-poem *Cain*. The Keltic note, rich, æsthetic, emotional, prevails almost to the exclusion of the Anglo-Saxon. There is no moral struggle, and little spiritual sense, but there are grace and passion and "that fitful strain of melancholy which," says Poe, "will ever be found inseparable from the perfection of the beautiful." Poe's nautical adventurer, Pym, declares that when listening as a boy to stories of the sea, accounts of suffering and despair attracted him more than the brighter side of the picture. "My visions were of shipwreck and famine; of death or captivity among barbarian hordes, of a lifetime dragged out in sorrow and tears, upon some gray and desolate rock, in an ocean unapproachable and unknown." It is then inappropriate to pity Poe too much. Though his life was

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They

Nathaniel Hawthorne.

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wild and sad, wildness and sadness were to him fairer than sobriety and joy, and he transformed his sorrows and his frowardness into a literature which, not wholesome, not heroic, and not noble, has withal a unique magic.

IV. **Idealism.** — Poe would have resented the suggestion that he was, in his own scoffing phrase, "affected with the transcendentals," and yet his genius had much in common with that of the supreme idealist in American romance, NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. An English critic has suggested that "Poe is a kind of Hawthorne and *delirium tremens*," which is not fair to either. There was something obstinately earthy in Poe's imagination, something strangely guilty in his consciousness, but he has a realm of music denied to Hawthorne, who, on his side, is not to be defined as a fraction of Poe. They have points of resemblance as artists and as dreamers. Both turned instinctively to the short story, and in those few tales where Poe depicts the workings of conscience, as *The Man of the Crowd* or *William Wilson*, their styles approximate. Both were dwellers in the dusk, but the shadow that haunted Poe crept from the charnel-house, while Hawthorne's, sprung from the sinful heart of man, showed still a glint of heaven.

In view of the character of his work, Hawthorne's heredity is of peculiar interest. In his *Grandfather's Chair*, a group of Puritan sketches for children which he likened to an attempt "to manufacture delicate playthings out of the granite rocks" of New England, Haw-

thorne describes the coming to Salem, in 1630, of the good ship "Arbella." On this vessel, which bore John Winthrop, arrived a young Englishman, William Hathorne, who developed great vigor as explorer, legislator, fur-trader, Indian-fighter, and Quaker-whipper. In the preface to the *Scarlet Letter*, musing upon the old, witch-storied Salem, his birthplace and his home, Hawthorne wrote: "I seem to have a stronger claim to a residence here on account of this grave, bearded, sable-cloaked and steeple-crowned progenitor, — who came so early, with his Bible and his sword, and trode the unworn street with such a stately port, and made so large a figure, as a man of war and peace. . . . His son, too, inherited the persecuting spirit, and made himself so conspicuous in the martyrdom of the witches, that their blood may fairly be said to have left a stain upon him. . . . Planted deep, in the town's earliest infancy and childhood, by these two earnest and energetic men, the race has ever since subsisted here. . . . From father to son, for above a hundred years, they followed the sea; a gray-bearded shipmaster, in each generation, retiring from the quarter-deck to the homestead, while a boy of fourteen took the hereditary place before the mast, confronting the salt spray and the gale, which had blustered against his sire and grandsire." Hawthorne's grandfather commanded a privateer in the War of Independence and was the subject of one of our Revolutionary ballads, *Bold Hathorne*. The father of the romancer was a captain in the merchant marine, dying at a foreign

port of yellow fever. The pensive scion of this hardy line used to smile in fancying how paltry his pursuits must seem to his ghostly ancestors, especially those first two "stern and black-browed Puritans." "'What is he?' murmurs one gray shadow of my forefathers to the other. 'A writer of story-books! What kind of a business in life, — what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation, — may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!' Such are the compliments bandied between my great-grandsires and myself, across the gulf of time! And yet, let them scorn me as they will, strong traits of their nature have intertwined themselves with mine."

Hawthorne's boyhood was shadowed by his mother's widow-grief. He was a child of four summers when the word came of his young father's death, and it was long before the mother's "heart, like a deep lake, had grown calm because its dead had sunk down so far within." Yet despite that atmosphere of sorrow, the boy, with his two affectionate sisters and his indulgent uncles and aunts, seems to have taken life much in boyhood's joyous fashion. He tended his pets and rambled and read. *Pilgrim's Progress* was a favorite, and the first book he bought with his own money was the *Faery Queene*. The *Newgate Calendar* figures on his list, with Shakespeare, Milton, and Rousseau. Among his teachers was Worcester, the lexicographer, but his Salem schooling was delightfully interrupted by seasons

of running wild on his uncle's estate at Raymond, in Maine. Here, with an old fowling-piece over his shoulder, he would plunge into the trackless forest, or "skate until midnight, all alone, upon Sebago Lake, with the deep shadow of the icy hills on either hand." At seventeen he was ready for Bowdoin and started out from Boston in the old-fashioned stage-coach, a slender, bright-eyed lad, with clustering dark hair, to seek that somewhat primitive well of knowledge. He had Longfellow for a classmate and Franklin Pierce for a friend, but seems to have given his confidence most freely to Horatio Bridge, who predicted great things for him. "I know not whence your faith came," wrote Hawthorne to Bridge, in the preface to *The Snow Image*, "but, while we were lads together at a country college, — gathering blueberries in study hours, under those tall academic pines; or watching the great logs, as they tumbled along the current of the Androscoggin; or shooting pigeons and gray squirrels in the woods; or bat-fowling in the summer twilight; or catching trouts in the shadowy little stream which, I suppose, is still wandering river-ward through the forest, — though you and I will never cast a line in it again, — two idle lads, in short (as we need not fear to acknowledge now), doing a hundred things that the Faculty never heard of, or else it had been the worse for us, — still it was your prognostic of your friend's destiny that he was to be a writer of fiction." The future master of romance meanwhile ranked low in mathematics and metaphysics, and

the required chapel declamations were as appalling to him as an after-dinner speech in later years. Latin was more to his mind, but he neglected all his academic tasks, even themes, and sowed a few Puritan wild-oats at a secret and perilous card-table. He went through Commencement day without embarrassment of college honors and was not heard from for twelve years after. In 1837, a very slight stir in the literary world signalled the appearance of *Twice-Told Tales*.

This quiet volume, which was several years in paying expenses, does not seem at first sight an abundant harvest for the opening decade of manhood, but the little book was wrought of glory-stuff. Hawthorne had resided, for almost this entire time, in Salem. In an upper-story room in his father's house, where his mother and sisters led lives as secluded and individual as his own, he had brooded, written and burned and written again, and bided his hour of fame. "If ever I should have a biographer," Hawthorne wrote in his note-book, "he ought to make great mention of this chamber in my memoirs, because so much of my lonely youth was wasted here, and here my mind and character were formed; and here I have been glad and hopeful, and here I have been despondent. And here I sat a long, long time, waiting patiently for the world to know me, and sometimes wondering why it did not know me sooner, or whether it would ever know me at all, — at least, till I were in my grave. And sometimes it seemed as if I were already in the grave, with only life enough to be chilled and

benumbed. But oftener I was happy." And happy he must have been, in the artist's joy of labor, even although for years his dream mocked at his deed. When he had been but a short time out of Bowdoin, he wrote *Fanshawe*, a college novel, which he published at his own expense and, in swift distaste, withdrew from circulation. The simple plot centres about the president's ward, one of those soft and shining images of girlhood which haunt the reveries of young collegians. All the undergraduates devote the chapel hour to gazing upon this starry vision, but two become her manifest lovers. One of these, the study-wasted Fanshawe, rescues her from the hands of a villain. She would have plighted troth to her deliverer, but he refuses to take advantage of her gratitude, yields her to his rival, a dashing fellow from one of the seaport towns, and returns to his books, which bring him to a speedy grave. The story has impressive passages and is pervaded by a faint Hawthornesque flavor, but the conception is boyish and the handling not yet firm. The atmosphere, too, is ill-defined. The frank actualities of student life are hardly reproduced, while the illusion of an ideal world fails to possess the reader. Another 'prentice volume, which those who had peeped into the scribbled leaves thought more characteristic, *Seven Tales of my Native Land*, met with such disheartening treatment from the clan of publishers that the proud young author, with the emotions depicted in *The Devil in Manuscript*, cast the whole budget into the fire. Our mortal dependence upon bread and butter

led Hawthorne to engage for a brief period in hack-work for "Peter Parley," and at rare intervals one of his tales filled some modest corner of a magazine or annual, but, in the main, he lived in his haunted chamber, from twenty-one to thirty-three, "the most obscure man of letters in America." His Bowdoin mates were well-advanced on the trodden ways of the world, variously successful in politics, business, and the professions; Longfellow had taken a Harvard chair; but Hawthorne had nothing to show for his hidden life save the first series of *Twice-Told Tales*.

This publication, although warmly hailed by Longfellow in the *North American Review*, made little impression on the public. It was five years before Hawthorne followed it up by the second series, and three years more before he published *Mosses from an old Manse*. His later volumes of short stories, though designed for children, are as precious to adults as to any saucy Primrose, exact little Sweet-Fern, Periwinkle, or Squash-Blossom of them all. The *Twice-Told Tales* consist of pure fantasies, New England legends, and realistic studies. These last, like much of the work preserved in Hawthorne's note-books, testify to that self-imposed discipline of strict observation and accurate expression, which constituted his technical training for the art of literature. In *Sunday at Home*, for instance, we catch a glimpse of the sequestered student peeping out, pen in hand, around his window-curtain to spy upon the throng of church-goers, and in *Snow-Flakes* we see him, through the frosted pane, scanning

the brown surface of the street and the slated roofs of the houses, that he may transfer to his waiting page the precise effect upon their coloring of the first stealthy touches of the storm. Yet the slightest of such sketches is saved from mere photography by a delicate suffusion of sentiment, and the simplest sentence bears traces of the chisel. His tales of primitive New England, the *Maypole of Merry Mount*, the *Gray Champion*, *Legends of the Province House*, show what a fascination the Puritan era had for his imagination. Those sombre virtues, shedding about them that supernatural atmosphere he loved, appealed to his patriotic pride, but it was the picturesqueness, quite as much as the heroism, of the grim saints who sowed corn and dug graves in the fringe of the "sad forest" that attracted him. The contrast, too, between the divineness of the venture and the prosaic fashion in which it was pursued, between the burning soul of faith and its matter-of-fact, dismal body of Puritanism, rejoiced him with a pure artistic joy. The Pilgrim Fathers would hardly recognize themselves in Hawthorne's painting. His early New England is, in a very different way, as much his own creation as the Dutch dynasty of New Amsterdam is Irving's. Both the majesty and the harshness of that iron age he enveloped in a rich, soft, dreamy shadow. About the plainest and most austere of religions he draped a dusky ermine of romance. Gloom and mysticism inform, too, his tales of fantasy. Allegories of sin, failure, death, the irony of human fate, and the immortality of human folly

may be read in the *Minister's Black Veil*, the *Great Carbuncle*, the *Ambitious Guest*, *David Swan*, *Dr. Heidegger's Experiment*. And here, again, Hawthorne is distilling the very essence of his heredity and environment into art. That crushing sense of human responsibility, of conscience, sin, and doom, those tremendous Puritan convictions sealed by blood and tears, through some strange witchcraft served this son of Salem as sheer beauty. The measure of Hawthorne's æsthetic appreciation was the measure of his remoteness.

The atmosphere of the *Twice-Told Tales* is somewhat thin and gray. "They have," said the author, in the preface to a later edition, "the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a shade, — the coolness of a meditative habit, which diffuses itself through the feeling and observation of every sketch. Instead of passion there is sentiment; and, even in what purport to be pictures of actual life, we have allegory, not always so warmly dressed in its habiliments of flesh and blood as to be taken into the reader's mind without a shiver." In *Mosses from an Old Manse* the tragic hue is deepened, although, by a peculiarly Hawthornesque anomaly, these tales were written in the early years of his marriage, when life was at its fairest and its best. *The Birth-Mark* mocks our longing for perfection, *Young Goodman Brown* sables all humanity with suspicion of secret sin, *Rappaccini's Daughter* develops that theme, to which Hawthorne again and again recurred, of a malignant poison lurking in most luxuriant beauty. Yet the feast here set before

us is not all "fricassee of scorpions" and "apples of Sodom." Upon the revel of fancy often rests a tender light. Sometimes a shadowy smile plays about the lips of the narrator. Hawthorne's ease and force of style are now assured. The sustained grotesquery of *Feather-top*, the sad humor of *The Intelligence Office*, that close of "solemn music" in *The Procession of Life*, could hardly, in their respective veins, be bettered. So the tales in the *Snow Image* collection, though some of these further illustrate Hawthorne's craving to know the innermost contents of that burden which Christian carried on his back, though they deal with grief and death, the slavery of guilt and the torment of the unpardonable sin, have a frequent strain of lightness and good hope. Very sweetly does *The Snow Image* itself set forth the ruinous effects of common sense; very nobly does *The Great Stone Face* exalt the world's supreme glory of sincere, benignant character. Near the outset of his career Hawthorne had written: "If I pride myself on anything, it is because I have a smile that children love," and the *Snow Image* stories in large part belong to childhood, together with *The Wonder Book* and *The Tanglewood Tales*. In these fresh and dew-bright volumes, Hawthorne, as all the world knows, marvellously succeeded in coaxing the proud beauty of Greek mythology to go playing through the glades of Tanglewood in the simple, rustic garb of a Gothic fairy-tale. By this time the romancer had a home of his own, musical with childish voices. The world owes to the two younger

of Hawthorne's children, Julian Hawthorne, journalist and novelist, and Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, poet in words and deeds, access to letters and memories which reveal a well-nigh perfect marriage. The date of the wedding is 1842, but the betrothal had been of several years' standing, and Hawthorne's long habit of solitude was already broken. That patient existence in a locked chamber, with the tray of food placed outside the door, and the day's long brooding and writing relieved only by an evening walk upon the beach, had done its work. He who in boyhood had avowed that he did "not want to be a doctor and live by men's diseases, nor a minister to live by their sins, nor a lawyer and live by their quarrels," had become, as he hoped, an author, to live by men's love of the beautiful.

But the few carvings which Hawthorne had retained from all the chippings of the studio meant so little in the way of money that he gladly accepted an appointment, under Bancroft the historian, in the Boston Custom House. It was Van Buren's administration that was thus minded to honor literary Democrats and, as a tribute to romance, set America's most sensitive genius to measuring coal from dawn to sunset. "A very grievous thraldom" he came to find it, but, at the end of two years, he had saved a thousand dollars, which he promptly sunk in the Brook Farm experiment. Thus casting in his lot with Ripley's enthusiasts, Hawthorne entered upon the April ploughing and planting with a humorous zest, hoping soon to marry and bring his

wife to share that "Age of Reason in a patty-pan," as Curtis called it, but by another springtide the "witty potato patches" and "sparkling cornfields" had lost their charm. He was thirty-eight years old, with little sign of worldly wealth, when he brought the happiest of brides to Concord, where they proceeded to add another lustre to the memories of the *Old Manse*. "Nobody but we ever knew what it is to be married," wrote the new Adam to the new Eve, and out of the heart of his happiness he looked back upon that dreary chamber in Salem with more than content: "I am disposed to thank God for the gloom and chill of my early life, in the hope that my share of adversity came then, when I bore it alone." But except with his wife he still kept his dark mantle of reserve folded close about him. Curtis, who had a blithe young share in all the phases of Transcendentalism, gives a roguish account of a representative Concord gathering, in Emerson's study, where the philosophers talked Orphic secrets and ate russet apples, while "Hawthorne, a statue of night and silence, sat a little removed, under a portrait of Dante, gazing imperturbably upon the group."

Plain fare and rickety furniture count for little in Eden, but debts weigh upon an upright soul, and when another Democratic administration came in, Hawthorne went resignedly back to Salem to barter "the delicate harvest of fancy and sensibility" for "a pittance of the public gold." Three years he served in the Custom House, his imagination all the while "a tarnished mirror," and

when the political pendulum swung the Whigs again into office, they did better than they meant in turning Hawthorne out. The discharged Surveyor of Customs wrote *The Scarlet Letter*, which called forth, from the public hitherto so indifferent to his work, an instantaneous acclaim that was not to die away. At forty-six, after twenty-five years of striving, he had won fame. In this brief romance all his past, — the stern heredity and youthful dream, the lonely devotion to his art, and the realization, through love, of the vital forces of life — broke into flower, and a wonderful, blood-red flower it was. On turning the leaves of the *Note-Books*, one is impressed with the stories that Hawthorne never told, stories of a lake all whose drowned should rise together, of a visionary trying to kindle his household hearth with fireflies, of the after life of that young man whom Jesus, looking on, loved. Woods and streets, books and cloudland, gave him magical hints, of which by far the most, perhaps the best, lie undeveloped. "Life now swells and heaves beneath me like a brim-full ocean," once he wrote, "and the endeavor to comprise any portion of it in words is like trying to dip up the ocean in a goblet." But the symbol of the scarlet letter, one of those cruel ingenuities of Puritan punishment, already touched upon in *Endicott and the Red Cross*, would not let him go. His imagination naturally crystallized about some emblem, — a mirror, a serpent, a butterfly, a ruddy footprint, — but here, as seldom before, the symbolism burned with a passion more engrossing than itself. Yet

Hawthorne takes up his tragedy at the point where many writers would have dropped it. "The mere facts of guilt," he elsewhere wrote, "are of little value except to the gossip and the tipstaff; but how the wounded and the wounding soul bear themselves after the crime, that is one of the needful lessons of life." That most friendly of publishers, James T. Fields, whose name adorns the illustrious roll of *Atlantic* editors, clamored for a second manuscript and obtained *The House of the Seven Gables*. This sweeter and less powerful romance, written in the red cottage at Lenox with the buoyancy born of unaccustomed praise, eased the author's mind of the old witch-curse pronounced upon his persecuting ancestor, Justice Hathorne. In the least mystical and hence the least characteristic and precious of his long stories, *The Blithedale Romance*, written at West Newton, he drew upon his memories of Brook Farm. Although Poe, who had been among the first to recognize Hawthorne's values, feared he was too much under the influence of the New England enthusiasts and irreverently counselled him to "mend his pen, get a bottle of visible ink, come out from the Old Manse, cut Mr. Alcott," and "hang (if possible) the editor of *The Dial*," Hawthorne had never been, in fact, the thrall of "Giant Transcendentalism." His tale *Earth's Holocaust* shows what an alien his dreamy, dusk-winged genius was among the cheerful philosophies and bustling agitations of his day. He was capable of dubbing Alcott the "airy Sage of Apple-

Slump," and his *Blithedale Romance* gave offence to the Brook Farmers, especially to the friends of Margaret Fuller.

The election to the Presidency of Hawthorne's college comrade, Franklin Pierce, for whom he had been persuaded to write a campaign biography, brought upon the sensitive romancer, once again, the blight of public office. In the "stifled chamber" of the American consulate at Liverpool he "spent wearily a considerable portion of more than four good years." He supported his family and paid his debts, but no adequate literary result came from this English residence. *Our Old Home*, made up from his journals, was, as he said, "not a good or a weighty book," — in comparison, let it be added, with what he might have done, as evinced by the fruit of a subsequent year in Italy, *The Marble Faun*. Yet the French and Italian *Note-Books* reveal, no less than the English, a frequent mood of repletion and distaste. It was the necessity of his genius, as of Emerson's, to eat and not be eaten, — to assimilate what he saw, to reduce objects to impressions and transmute life into literature; but upon him, as upon Emerson, the foreign demand was too heterogeneous, multitudinous, incessant. He found the British Museum depressing, and was very glad he had "seen the pope, because now he may be crossed out of the list of sights to be seen." As with Emerson, too, his New England love of cleanliness and freshness was continually affronted. This "Artist of the Beautiful," who in the Salem days had been so cheered by a

"wandering flock of snowbirds" or the "gush of violets along a woodpath," hated the "dirt and squalor" of Italian cities and sickened before the chapel frescoes, "poor, fouled relics, looking as if the Devil had been rubbing and scrubbing them for centuries in spite against the saints." Yet although to his overtaxed spirit the masterpieces of mediæval painting and sculpture were often "heavily burdensome," the Faun of Praxiteles at once entranced his fancy. The story, as he at first conceived it, was to have "all sorts of fun and pathos in it," but when he came to "close grips" with his romance, it took on, amid supreme beauty of detail, the true Hawthornesque semblance of tragic mystery. In *The Marble Faun* his pure and tranquil grace of style is at its best. The economy of incident is not so strict as in the statuesque simplicity of the *Scarlet Letter* groupings, nor is the dramatic intensity so keen; but there is Hawthorne's own rich, subdued, autumnal coloring, with the first soft shadows deepening into sable. Emerson, whom Hawthorne's Concord journal once noted as coming to call "with a sunbeam in his face," unwittingly returned the compliment by saying that Hawthorne "rides well his horse of the night." Gloom has its own enchantment, and so has mystery, but the issues of this romance were left in an uncertainty that its readers found hard to bear. Hawthorne would not help them. He was fertile in misleading suggestions and tricksy hypotheses, but perhaps he hardly knew the actual fate of Miriam and Donatello. Such a "cloudy veil" as he found

stretched over "the abyss" of his own nature may have been interposed between himself and the innermost secrets of his characters. Supernatural forces, too, entered in, as in life, amid the personages of his tales and played their inscrutable parts beside them. Among the baffling questions is one suggested by Hawthorne's younger daughter, who, with her husband, George Parsons Lathrop, poet and novelist, has embraced the Roman faith. Mrs. Lathrop claims that *The Marble Faun*, if closely studied, shows in the treatment of sin and atonement a significant divergence from the Puritan romances.

Just before the Civil War Hawthorne came home, — a woeful time for any patriot, but most for one of divided sympathies. In that strong sketch he was destined never to fill out, *Septimius Felton*, he dwells upon the wretched sense of being "ajar with the human race" which besets "a man of brooding thought" in any violent crisis. He took up his abode at *The Wayside*, in Concord, and while insidious disease was stealing upon his system, strove to fashion this new "Romance of Immortality." The unfinished manuscript was laid upon his coffin.

V. **Realism.** — Such sweeping terms as realism, idealism, romanticism, cannot be used with mathematical precision. In general, our four leaders in fiction, Cooper, Irving, Poe, and Hawthorne, writing in the spirit of beauty and for the end of joy, emphasize those elements of life either strange in themselves or strange to their

audiences, and are so far romanticists. In general, too, they are all idealists, although the high, pure essence of spirituality is incarnate in Hawthorne alone. Through the green solitudes of Cooper's forests move Indians nobler than ordinary experience discloses, and the pirates who sail his bounding seas have gifts and graces that the dull world never guessed. In Irving's Dutch villages, nestling along the Hudson, gossip figures quainter than common eye can find, and the fretted arches of the Alhambra sigh with marvellous legends. Poe's imaginations, clinging to nerve and brain, flash search-lights into the pit of death, while Hawthorne opens, beneath the daily aspect of life, that more awful and mysterious abyss of moral consciousness.

It is just this daily aspect of life which is prized by the new realism. The minute reproduction of the commonplace is the latest pride of fiction. "As in literature," says Howells, "the true artist will shun the use even of real events if they are of an improbable character, so the sincere observer of man will not desire to look upon his heroic or occasional phases, but will seek him in his habitual moods of vacancy and tiresomeness." This doctrine, at the fore in Russia and France and sufficiently active in England, has dominated American fiction since the Civil War. Truthful reports of the face of nature and society were nothing new. Cooper pictured the landscapes he had known from childhood, Irving was a guest in Bracebridge Hall, Poe had a scientific care for detail, and Hawthorne practised himself

from youth till death in closeness of observation and correctness of verbal rendering. But not one of them reproduced for the sake of reproduction. Cooper wanted a setting for his story, and Irving a scene for his sentiment, while Poe and Hawthorne observed a scrupulous veracity in trifles to pave the way for prodigies. The new realism, on the contrary, is almost a branch of sociological science. It seeks, above all else, to get a photograph of things as they look, — on the theory, which is open to question, that things look as they are.

The realism of personal adventure, which relates unusual experiences with the manner, if not the matter, of fiction, is exemplified in the thrilling chapters of Kennan's *Siberian Travels*, or in that boy-beloved volume, the younger Dana's *Two Years before the Mast*, or even in Kane's *Arctic Explorations*, of which Thoreau characteristically remarked that "most of the phenomena noted might be observed in Concord." But even this form of writing tends to become less and less spontaneous and more and more a matter of business. Where to-day enterprising journalism sends Richard Harding Davis to Cuba to "write up" the insurrection, and Julian Hawthorne to India to "report" the famine, half a century since we had Bayard Taylor's *Views Afoot* and Parkman's *Oregon Trail*. An interesting book in this category is Clemens's *Life on the Mississippi*, which tells incidentally whence he derived his pen-name of "Mark Twain," and helps to a better understanding of so ver-

satile and unequal an author. As a specimen of the story built on a substructure of travel, Theodore Winthrop's *John Brent*, with a black horse for hero and a wild gallop over the prairie for chief adventure, is well worth reading. This gallant scion of the old Winthrop house, who, thirty years before the firing on Sumter, was a toddling "golden-haired boy, with a picture-book under each arm," and who, volunteering at the first call for troops, was one of the first to fall, left several stories behind him, all with something of youthful crudity upon them, and something more of lofty promise. They vary in tone from the out-of-door breeziness of *John Brent*, "full of gold air," to the Hawthornesque glooms of that powerful study in evil, *Cecil Dreeme*. But our modern realism lends itself especially to close local portraitures, as in the New England stories most delicately done by SARAH O. JEWETT, most vigorously by MARY E. WILKINS. It is of interest to trace this New England line from HARRIET BEECHER STOWE, with her *Old-Town Folks*, *The Minister's Wooing*, and other well-remembered novels, to the short, dialect stories of Alice Brown, still at the outset of her career, and note the narrowing and intensifying of the realistic method. The down-East novels of Mrs. Elizabeth Stoddard, poet wife of poet husband, strike, for all their abrupt energy of passion, the unmistakable New England seaport note. Even Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford, naturally a dweller "in Titian's garden," she who flushed her *Amber Gods* with such ardent color, tries to fall in with the prevailing school. ELIZABETH

STUART PHELPS WARD, while she idealizes her characters, paints Fisherman Jack and the "Christman" against the Gloucester background that she knows so well. Edward Everett Hale's famous "Double" was not more like himself than the cheery, busy, Boston details of many of his stories are like the life that beats at his study doors. But he is only a spy in the realist camp and may at any moment betray us to a brick moon or a conversational umbrella.

> "The fierce confederate storm
> Of sorrow barricadoed evermore
> Within the walls of cities"

engages many pens. Chicago has found an observant painter in Henry Fuller, who, like Boyesen, was swept by the tide of realism from his morning course. A San Francisco journalist, Chester Bailey Fernald, explores the queer corners of Chinatown. "The enormous hive called Manhattan Island" gives scope for the varying talents of Howells, James, Crawford, Warner, Brander Matthews, Edgar Fawcett, William Henry Bishop. H. C. Bunner, Thomas A. Janvier, and even Hopkinson Smith, who has turned from the picturesque old Colonel Carter of Cartersville to that dauntless stevedore of Staten Island, Tom Grogan. The graphic contrasts of New York life recall a cry from the luxurious days of England under the Stuarts: "Alas, how bitterly the spirit of poverty spouts itself against my weal and felicity! but I feel it not. I cherish and make much of myself, flow forth in ease and delicacy, while that murmurs and starves." At

least our modern fiction does not blink the facts. Julian Ralph searches out the secrets of the Big Barracks, and Richard Harding Davis, whose mother, Rebecca Harding Davis, had turned by native impulse to the "Story of To-day," reports Gallagher as well as Van Bibber. The strike finds its way into literature, together with "that bitter blossom of civilization," the tramp. Aldrich's *Stillwater Tragedy*, "Octave Thanet's" *Stories of a Western Town*, Mrs. Mary Hallock Foote's *Cœur d'Alène* are examples of the fiction that concerns itself with labor questions. Philanthropies are canvassed no less than felonies. In that keen and earnest little volume, Margaret Sherwood's *An Experiment in Altruism*, even the College Settlement passes under survey.

There are still a few writers who look wistfully toward romance. Thomas Nelson Page throws "a light of other days" over his blithe and tender tales of the Old Dominion; James Lane Allen, interpreter of the Blue Grass region, shapes his poetic temper but slowly to the current mode; and the Creoles would have us believe that George Washington Cable portrays them more from imagination than experience. Historical fiction tempts the author aside from the burden and heat of his own day. Colonial and Revolutionary stories are much in vogue. Mrs. Mary Hartwell Catherwood and Gilbert Parker go gleaning after Parkman. It is on European ground that our romancers often score their triumphs, as the Baroness Blanche Willis Howard Teufel in *Guenn*, and Arthur Sherburne Hardy in *Passe Rose*. This feat has been multi-

Yours very Truly Henry James.

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plied by one of America's most popular novelists, FRANCIS MARION CRAWFORD, son of Crawford the sculptor. "No year without its book" would seem to be his literary motto, save that his annual output more frequently doubles that number, but these volumes which defile in such swift and varied procession before the public, romances of India, Arabia, Constantinople, Italy, and stories of modern New York, are alike in the feature of lively interest. Crawford frankly undertakes to be entertaining. To him the "purpose novel" is "an odious thing." He claims that the novel should be an "intellectual artistic luxury" rather than an "intellectual moral lesson,"—in short, "a pocket-theatre." He cannot always refrain from doing a little preaching on his own account, especially in the books that deal with American politics and manners, but when he writes of Italy, the glowing land of his nativity, didacticism melts away and leaves pure artist. His greatest achievement yet is the strong series of *Saracinesca*, *Sant' Ilario*, *Don Orsino*, and *Corleone*.

Another American author of foreign residence is HENRY JAMES, who bears the name of a father well reputed for works on philosophy and religion, and has a brother in Harvard's distinguished group of philosophical professors. Our "international novelist" is little to the general taste. The simple, kindly stories of Rev. E. P. Roe and the Biblical romances of Gen. Lew Wallace count many readers to his one. It has been the fashion to decry James for lack of patriotism; but while he has no enthusiasm for "mankind in its

shirtsleeves," he can hardly be said to bear more heavily on one nationality than another. Human nature itself is a little abashed before him. His characters are usually at the disadvantage of being away from their natural environment, — if Americans, abroad; if Europeans, in Massachusetts; if Londoners, in Paris; if Italians, in London. Mr. Dosson, lounging helplessly in the court of the Hôtel de l'Univers, as if dangled from the end of "an invisible string," is a very different man from Mr. Dosson in his counting-room at home. The grand indictment which James brings against his countrymen is vulgarity, — a vulgarity not ingrain, but born of worldly ignorance and of that cheerful self-confidence imparted by a good conscience. In contrast to the American individualism, the French sense of family is emphasized, and in contrast to social ostentation in America, the quiet dignity of English intercourse. One does not often care greatly for the mere story James has to tell, and that is fortunate, since his stories have a way of ceasing in mid career, but now and then, as in *The Princess Cassamassima*, the situation strongly appeals. The heaving unrest and anarchistic conspiracies of all Europe give substance to this tragedy of the little London bookbinder, son at once of the oppressed and the oppressor. The interest of James's books mainly lies, however, in the microscopic observation of men and manners, in the labyrinthine discussion of problems of conduct, approached from the side of taste rather than of conscience, and in the beauty of detail, the ele-

gance and accuracy of the workmanship. Frequently his themes seem best adapted to the short story, in which he excels, and in which he is increasingly prone to turn his cunning camera on the artistic consciousness. Two of his richest books, *Roderick Hudson* and *The Tragic Muse*, study the creative temperament as variously directed toward sculpture, painting, the stage; but in his briefer tales, James directly presents the literary genius in phases of subtle failure, and still more subtle success. The short story, too, most brilliantly exhibits his gift of well-bred satire, never quite divorced from an equally well-bred seriousness. For plain people, James's style is over-wrought; there is too much sauce for the pudding; but those upon whom its fine fascination has once fixed, think better of themselves ever after. The author is, as he says of one of his heroes, "much addicted to conversing with his own wit." Everything has the intellectual and self-conscious flavor, from that "beautiful, slim tower" of Sienna "as it played at contrasts with the large blue air," to his deliberative lovers "engaged in making studies for matrimony." In rare moments, James achieves the ethereal and the passionate. His general manner is still cold, watchful, analytic, but upon the language sometimes steals, as in certain passages from *The Altar of the Dead*, a strange and solemn glow. But his reserved and baffling Muse soon suffers the fate of poor Isabel Archer: "Then the middle years wrapped her about again, and the gray curtain of her indifference closed her in."

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS is an American product. Instead of enjoying a foreign education, as fell to the lot of Crawford and of James, he went as a little fellow into his father's printing-office in that crude river hamlet of Ohio, the enchanted "Boy's Town" of his memory, and made his way to larger opportunity by dint of his own exertions. His first story, *Their Wedding Journey*, expresses the mingled reverence and discomfort with which the West, a generation since, regarded Boston, — an Athens whose divine air was tempered by the chill of the east wind. *Their Wedding Journey* had an idyllic note, but Howells soon swung into the mid-channel of realism. "Let me alone to observe till I turn myself to nothing but observation." Stevenson characterized Howells as "a man in love with the appearance of life." Whether he is in love with all he describes or not, we are assured that he has a principle at stake, and will not spare us a single stain on the table-cloth, nor the feeblest idiocy of conversation. American realism derives directly from George Washington. It cannot tell a lie. Howells contends that the live grasshopper is better worth describing than the most elaborate wire and cardboard "type"; he even suggests that "the people who have been brought up on the ideal grasshopper, the heroic grasshopper, the impassioned grasshopper, the self-devoted, adventureful, good old romantic grasshopper, must die out before the simple, honest, and natural grasshopper can have a fair field." There are those who fear that this monotonous insect will lay waste the land of imagi-

nation, but Howells has held for twenty years firmly to his theory, spending upon his Bartley Hubbards and Silas Laphams, his Annie Kilburns and Lemuel Barkers, the utmost pains of a well-mastered art. The strong influence of Tolstoi, however, seems to have opened Howells's eyes of late to more varied and more tragic types of modern man. His characteristic kindliness is deeply enlisted for the sufferers in life's battle, and a strain of perplexed sadness pervades his recent work. Those who, seeing enough in their daily routine of stupid and silly people, like themselves, have turned in weariness away from Howells's familiar copies, will find in *The Hazard of New Fortunes* that a change is passing upon his canvas. Happily, however, the quiet humor, which makes the connubial jarrings of the Marches so agreeable, does not forsake him. It would seem, in truth, as if men, and even women, were more mysterious and more poetic beings than Howells has hitherto admitted. Something heavenly shines through the humdrum. It is perhaps well to have the buttons counted,

> "Yet may the soul pitch her adventure high,
> With beauty and with love impassioned, though we die."

# APPENDIX

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM USE

WHAT may an intelligent young American reasonably be expected to know of American literature? In answer I would propose that:

1. He should understand the general character of the artistic production belonging to the several periods of America's historical development. His wits might play upon such questions as the following: Why was literature in the Colonial period more theological than now? Why did not Benjamin Franklin write, like Henry James, international novels? Why did landscape painting and nature poetry appear simultaneously in American arts? How much had slavery to do with making American literature?

2. He should be acquainted with the lives and characteristics of our most eminent authors. Let these fifteen, at least, stand to him for friends in whose faces, habits, and homes he has a right to be interested and whose best books he has read, or hopes to read, and is saving money to buy: Franklin, Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, Emerson, Poe, Lanier, Irving, Cooper, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Webster, Parkman.

3. He should already know two or three of these authors well. The stimulating touch of literature upon the mind is

the best result of books. The taste for trash, too, is dispelled by noble reading.

"We needs must love the highest, when we see it."

4. He should recognize significant names, as he meets them in talk or print, and be able to refer them to their respective epochs and respective varieties of literature. It is most undesirable that he vex his memory with dates of births and deaths and editions, but he should promptly identify Channing, for example, as the Unitarian leader in New England in the earlier half of the present century, Sewall as the Colonial diarist, Patrick Henry as the great Virginian orator of Revolutionary times, and Joaquin Miller as a living poet of the Pacific coast. But of younger students a wide nodding acquaintance with American authors should not be exacted. It is better to know one than to know of twenty.

If this little book is to aid in attaining these results, too much stress should not be put upon it. The foregoing pages are not to be memorized, but read, discussed, and, the oftener the better, called into question. Their attempt to summarize the history and sketch the times needs to be reënforced by the reading, in class and out, of American tales and poems bearing upon the period under discussion. It might be practicable in High School work to select a single author, — most conveniently Hawthorne, whose books can now be had in cheap and pretty editions and whose writings deal with Colonial and Revolutionary times as well as modern, and use him throughout the course for supplementary reading. While the past is thus made vivid to the students, the charm of one of our supreme classics will have entered into their lives. Readings and recitals should form a frequent feature of the recitation hour; and, while the general work of the class may better

be concentrated upon the leading men, minor authors, especially those of local repute, can be presented by individual investigators. Let all resources afforded by public and private libraries be drawn upon to the utmost, let home readings and reading circles be encouraged, and let the development of a thoughtful interest in American progress and the fostering of a love for pure literature be aims held steadily in view.

This book calls for others, — original texts in plenty and a few sound works of reference. Stedman and Hutchinson's *Library of American Literature* (New York, Benjamin, 1887–90, $33) is of great value, especially for the earlier periods. The last of the eleven volumes includes one hundred and fifty pages of short biographies. If the school library cannot afford the work, the town library may. An excellent little book for the teacher's desk is Whitcomb's *Chronological Outlines of American Literature* (New York, Macmillan, 1894, $1.25). A helpful feature of this volume, needed to supplement the book in hand, is found in the last sixty pages, which contain lists of each author's works, with date of publication. The teacher will find useful, too, Professor Charles F. Richardson's full and weighty *American Literature* (New York, Putnam, 1891, $3.50), Oscar Fay Adams's *Dictionary of American Authors* (Boston, Houghton, 1897, $3), and Greenough White's *Sketch of the Philosophy of American Literature* (Boston, Ginn, 1891, $.35). Special uses are served by Louise Manly's *Southern Literature* (Richmond, Johnson Pub. Co., 1895, $1.50), W. H. Venable's *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley* (Cincinnati, Clarke, 1891, $3), F. P. Stearns's *Sketches from Concord and Appledore* (N. Y., Putnam, 1895, $2), and W. H. Rideing's *Boyhood of Famous Authors* (N. Y., Crowell, 1897, $1.25). Other books bearing on special subjects are noted below.

## CHAPTER I

COLONIAL life and history are clearly set forth in Henry Cabot Lodge's *English Colonies in America* (New York, Harper, 1881, $3). Side lights may be gained from such special studies, North and South, as Mrs. Alice Morse Earle's readable little volumes, *Colonial Days in Old New York*, *Costume of Colonial Times*, *Customs and Fashions in Old New England*, *The Sabbath in Puritan New England*, *Margaret Winthrop* (New York, Scribner, each $1.25), and from Mrs. Maud Wilder Goodwin's *Colonial Cavalier*, *White Aprons*, and *Head of a Hundred* (Boston, Little, each $1.25). The leading authority on the literature is Professor Moses Coit Tyler's *History of American Literature during the Colonial Time*, vol. I, 1607–1676, vol. II, 1676–1763 (New York, Putnam, 1897, $3). Generous and well-selected specimens of Colonial writing are given in the Stedman *Library*. The *Old South Leaflets*, too, furnish in form for classroom use interesting pages of history and biography, as, for example, a reprint of Cotton Mather's lives of Bradford and Winthrop (send for list to Directors of the Old South Work, Old South Meeting-House, Boston), and Maynard, Merrill & Co., New York, carry in their inexpensive booklets some Colonial material. For modern biographies, see Charles Dudley Warner's *Captain John Smith* (New York, Putnam, 1881, $1.25), Thomas Wentworth Higginson's *Life of Francis Higginson* (New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1891, $.75), Oscar S. Straus's *Roger Williams, the Pioneer of Religious Liberty* (New York, Century Co., 1894, $1.25), G. L. Walker's *Thomas Hooker* (New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1891, $1), Mrs. Helen Campbell's *Anne Bradstreet and her Time* (Boston, Lothrop, 1891, $1.25), Professor Barrett Wendell's *Cotton Mather* (New

York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1891, $1), and Professor A. V. G. Allen's *Life of Jonathan Edwards* (Boston, Houghton, 1889, $1.25). J. H. Twichell's *John Winthrop* (New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1891, $1) needs to be accompanied by the delightfully quaint correspondence between himself and his wife, Margaret Winthrop, as it is partially gathered in *Some Old Puritan Love-Letters* (New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1893, $2). The *Works of Anne Bradstreet* have been handsomely edited by John Harvard Ellis (Charlestown, Cutter, 1867). Sewall's *Diary* is given in full in the *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Fifth Series, vols. 5–7. More easily accessible is N. H. Chamberlain's *Samuel Sewall and the World he lived in* (Boston, DeWolfe, 1897, $1.50).

The classroom discussion of this Colonial chapter, section by section, might be enriched by the teacher from the books just mentioned, while the preparatory reading required of the students might better be drawn from Hawthorne's *Grandfather's Chair*, *Twice-Told Tales*, *Legends of the Province House*, and, with older classes, *The Scarlet Letter*. Whittier's many Colonial ballads are well suited to recital. Longfellow's *Hiawatha* and *Miles Standish*, with various minor poems, belong here, as well as Holmes's *On Lending a Punch-Bowl*, *The Pilgrim's Vision*, *Robinson of Leyden*, *Song for the Centennial Celebration of Harvard*. Mrs. Margaret J. Preston's *Colonial Ballads* relate incidents, northern and southern, of our early history. Lowell's essay upon *New England Two Centuries Ago*, and Emerson's *Historical Discourse at Concord*, are appropriate. Aside from any formal requirement, the opportunity might be taken to suggest for home reading such histories, travels, and romances as best fit the age and taste of individuals. If a student is inclined to speculate on the fortunes of an earlier America, it is the time to interest

him in Prescott's *Ferdinand and Isabella*, *Conquest of Mexico*, and *Conquest of Peru*, or Irving's *Life of Columbus* and *Companions of Columbus*, or John Fiske's *Discovery of America*. Fiskê's *Beginnings of New England* and *Old Virginia and her Neighbors*, and all Parkman's histories, are eminently readable. Coleridge avowed that "no one nowadays can write travels as well as the old worthies could, who figure in Hakluyt and Purchas," and surely many a boy would delight in those bulky volumes could they be obtained for him, or in Captain John Smith's own *Works*, admirably edited by Professor Edward Arber (who has faith in Smith's veracity) in the *English Scholar's Library*. The Elizabethan feeling for the New World adventure may be gathered from Froude's *English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century*, or, still more delightfully, from Kingsley's *Westward Ho*. For novels bearing on Colonial times, see pages 105, 277, and also Defoe's *Life of Colonel Jack*, John Esten Cooke's *My Lady Pokahontas*, F. J. Stimson's *King Noanett*, and the sweet-toned stories, *Penelope's Suitors*, *Agnes Surriage*, *The Begum's Daughter*, of Edwin Lassetter Bynner.

REVIEW QUESTIONS: What are the main periods of American literature? How did the northern settlers differ from the southern? By what right are Smith and Strachey claimed as American authors? Why was literature so belated in the South? What did the Pilgrims and Puritans hold most dear? What kind of books were written by the New England governors, and what kind by the New England ministers? What effect did Anne Bradstreet's surroundings have upon her poetic talent? What were the gains and losses of the later Colonial period in New England, as compared with the earlier? In what respects were Sewall and Cotton Mather alike, and in

what different? Why did portrait painting and domestic architecture appear in New England earlier than the other arts? What were the best qualities of Jonathan Edwards? What was the general character of American Colonial literature? What were the memorable books?

## CHAPTER II

THE literary authority for this period is Professor Moses Coit Tyler's *Literary History of the American Revolution*, vol. I, 1763–1776, vol. II, 1776–1783 (New York, Putnam, 1897, $6). For the political history we are fortunate in Fiske's *American Revolution* (Boston, Houghton, 1891, $4) and *Critical Period of American History*, 1783–89 (Boston, Houghton, 1889, $2). In the *American Statesmen* series are lives of Washington and Hamilton, by Henry Cabot Lodge; Jefferson, John Adams, and John Quincy Adams, by J. T. Morse; Samuel Adams, by J. K. Hosmer; Patrick Henry, by M. C. Tyler; Madison, by S. H. Gay; Marshall, by A. B. Magruder; John Randolph of Roanoke, by Henry Adams (Boston, Houghton, each $1.25). Franklin's books are many and are described in Paul Leicester Ford's *Bibliography of Franklin* (Brooklyn, 1889, $5). For the present use, see J. B. McMaster's *Franklin as a Man of Letters* (Boston, Houghton, 1888, $1.25). Washington, Jefferson, and Randolph are treated in William P. Trent's *Southern Statesmen of the Old Régime* (New York, Crowell, 1897, $2). Important contemporary biographies are Marshall's *Washington* and Wirt's *Patrick Henry*, nor is Irving's *Washington* far removed. As to the social and domestic life of the period, hints may be had from Alice Brown's *Mercy Warren*, Anne H. Wharton's *Martha Washington*, Maud Wilder Goodwin's

*Dolly Madison*, H. H. Ravenel's *Eliza Pinckney*, and Mary Gay Humphrey's *Catharine Schuyler* (New York, Scribner, each $1.25).

The best edition of Franklin's *Autobiography* is found in John Bigelow's *Life of Benjamin Franklin, Written by Himself* (Phil., Lippincott, 1889, $4.50, 3 vols.). A pretty little volume of *The Sayings of Poor Richard* has been edited by Paul Leicester Ford (New York, Putnam, 1891, $1). The *Autobiography* can be had for forty cents, and *Poor Richard's Almanack* for fifteen, in the Riverside Literature series (Boston, Houghton). For oratory, see the first volume of Johnston's *American Orations* (New York, Putnam, 1884, $3.75, 3 vols.). The *Writings of George Washington* are edited in fourteen volumes by W. C. Ford (New York, Putnam, 1889–96, each $5); the *Writings and Correspondence of Thomas Jefferson*, arranged by the same editor, will fill ten volumes (New York, Putnam, *in prog.*, each $5). The *Complete Works of Alexander Hamilton* are edited by Henry Cabot Lodge in nine volumes (New York, Putnam, 1886–87, $45). The same editor has issued *The Federalist* (New York, Putnam, 1888, $2).

While fragments of Revolutionary oratory may be declaimed in the classroom, it is evident that but little can be done with this mass of political writings, whose place is rather with constitutional history than with literature. The *Letters* of John Adams and of Abigail Adams, his wife (Old South Leaflets) are more to our purpose. An attempt should be made to bring the "Hartford Wits," as personalities, vividly before the class. Trumbull and Barlow are treated in Tyler's *Three Men of Letters* (New York, Putnam, 1895, $1.25), and there is a venerable *Memoir* of Dwight by his son. If the teacher can obtain Barlow's *Hasty-Pudding* in

full, farm boys and farm girls would hear it through, and portions of *McFingal* (conveniently edited by Benson J. Lossing, New York, Amer. Book Exchange, 1881, $.50) can still be enjoyed by wide-awake young Americans. A few of Freneau's lyrics are worth learning by heart, and spirited declamations or readings can be taken from Frank Moore's *Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution* (New York, Appleton, 1856), or the first volume of G. C. Eggleston's *American War Ballads and Lyrics* (New York, Putnam, 1889, $2.50, 2 vols.). *The Battle of the Kegs*, by Judge Francis Hopkinson, *Hail Columbia*, by Judge Joseph Hopkinson, his son, and Pierpont's *Warren's Address*, should not be overlooked. But it must be borne in mind that the poetry of the Revolution came later, with Longfellow's *Paul Revere's Ride* and Bryant's *Song of Marion's Men*, with Lanier's *Battle of Lexington* and Emerson's *Boston* and *Concord Hymn*, with Holmes's *Grandmother's Story of Bunker Hill Battle* and *Ballad of the Boston Tea-Party*. These, with others, have been collected by Professor Brander Matthews in *Poems of American Patriotism* (New York, Scribner, 1882, $1.50). So with the romances, since only gray hairs are warranted not to rise over the horrors of Charles Brockden Brown, let us anticipate a little and send the boys and girls to such good Revolutionary stories as Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's *Hugh Wynne*, F. H. Cogswell's *Regicides*, Mrs. Burton Harrison's *Son of the Old Dominion*, Mrs. Amelia E. Barr's *Bow of Orange Ribbon*, and Hezekiah Butterworth's *Patriot Schoolmaster*. This is the time for Hawthorne's *Septimius Felton* and Cooper's *Spy* and *Pilot*. See also pages 85–87, 105, 276, 277.

This period, like the Colonial, affords excellent opportunity for the study of autobiography, in the hands of a teacher who

cares for that form of literature and who has access to old books as well as new. Woolman's *Journal* is edited by Whittier (Boston, Osgood, 1871, $1.50), and among Whittier's poems may be found certain characteristic lines *To —— with a Copy of Woolman's Journal.*

It is finally suggested that, in the teaching of these two difficult periods, where actual literature is so scant, the kindred arts be pressed into service, and whatever the neighborhood affords in the way of old houses and old portraits, old furniture and old china, be made to do duty as a background for Colonial and Revolutionary letters.

REVIEW QUESTIONS: By the middle of the eighteenth century, what material basis of civilization had been established in each of the thirteen colonies? In what respects did Franklin typify the times? What were his chief services? What writings of his may claim to rank as literature, and on what grounds? How does the great theme of our Revolutionary authors connect with the great theme of our Colonial authors? At what stages in the long struggle for independence were oratory, generalship, statesmanship respectively most in demand? Wherein did the political views of Jefferson differ from those of Hamilton? Is the Declaration of Independence literature? What were the aspirations and achievements of the Hartford Wits? What was the best poetry of the period? How did the theatre make its way? Why were novels so late in appearing? How do these Revolutionary romances compare with our fiction of to-day? Wherein is the style of Woolman better than the style of Brown?

## CHAPTER III

THIS chapter attempts to give a rough sketch of the century, so that the buoyant tone of Knickerbocker literature, with its ready sensibility, the courage and faith of Transcendentalism, to which Unitarian freedom, foreign culture, and the new patriotism all contributed, and, finally, the seeming loss in quality, with gain in quantity, of our literary production since the War, may be better understood through their historic relations. While this chapter and the two preceding should be handled rapidly, that the bulk of the time may be reserved for the chapters presenting the more famous and fruitful American authors, yet each of these six sections might be made the basis for a lesson. In connection with sections first, third, and fifth, it is hoped that the student may be stirred to see to it that he know, if only in barest outline, the story of his nation. In connection with sections second, fourth, and sixth, the teacher may happily be moved to use what facilities are at his command for illustrating American development in the arts.

The students' preparation for a class discussion of the opening section might include the memorizing of Holmes's *Old Ironsides*. The teacher might be able to bring into the classroom James Jeffrey Roche's *Ballads of Blue Water* (Boston, Houghton, 1895, $1.25), of which several commemorate exploits of the War of 1812. These may suggest the home reading of Molly Elliot Seawell's spirited stories of the period, while the recital of Thomas Dunn English's *Battle of New Orleans* may prompt some boy to draw from the town library W. G. Sumner's *Andrew Jackson*, in the *American Statesmen* series.

The second section calls for musical and pictorial illustra-

tion, even if it be only the singing of Francis Scott Key's *Star-Spangled Banner*, or John Howard Payne's *Home, Sweet Home*, and the looking at the pictures in those old annuals, which may be found tucked away in many a family bookcase. Now, if ever, is the time to sample Mrs. Sigourney, Miss Sedgwick, and "Maria del Occidente." Especially would it be well, at this point, to dip into the writings of Willis and Morris and try to realize the literary life of that younger New York in which their influence was so great.

The third section might be connected, by way of preparation for class, with Emerson's lecture on *The Fortune of the Republic*, or with the first part of the *Biglow Papers*. Recitals bearing on the Mexican War, as Whittier's *Angels of Buena Vista* and Hoffman's *Monterey*, might be given in the classroom. At least one classroom hour is claimed by the westward migration, — an hour that might be spent in a recital of Walt Whitman's *Pioneers! O Pioneers!* and a reading of Will Carleton's *The First Settler's Story*. Here is the chance to turn young attention to that wealth of adventurous reading garnered in such books as Parkman's *Oregon Trail*, Winthrop's *John Brent*, Irving's *Captain Bonneville*, and Roosevelt's *Winning of the West*. Cooper's *Prairie* should be put into circulation. Aldrich's *Prudence Palfrey* gives a modest taste of mining life, which may be had to the heart's content in company with "Mark Twain," Joaquin Miller, and Bret Harte. Edward Eggleston's *Roxy* contains episodes of the Harrison and Tyler campaign, his *Graysons* introduces Lincoln as a young lawyer, and his *Hoosier Schoolmaster* draws a graphic picture of back-country life in the middle West.

Section fourth could involve the reading of the second part of the *Biglow Papers*, and might serve as incentive to an

informal concert of war-songs, closed by the recital of Francis Miles Finch's *The Blue and the Gray*. It would be well, at this point, to look a little into the writings of the southern lyrists and romancers mentioned in the text, as the emphasis in later chapters necessarily falls on the more abundant and important literature of the North. See pages 135, 186, 187, 320. The homely poetry of Irwin Russell and Stephen Collins Foster might aid in an attempt to realize the old régime in Dixie, and a teacher acquainted with the books of such modern Southerners as Thomas Nelson Page, James Lane Allen, and Joel Chandler Harris could bring graphic pictures of the past into the classroom. In connection with the stage, the *Autobiography of Joseph Jefferson* (New York, Century Co., 1890, $4) is of interest, and Emerson's essay on *Manners* might appropriately be considered here.

The fifth section and the sixth tread on thin ice. President Andrews's *The Last Quarter Century in the United States* (New York, Scribner, 1896, $6, 2 vols.) may be of service, and to the classroom hour might be contributed such recitals as Aldrich's *Unguarded Gates*, Joaquin Miller's *From Sea to Sea*, and Professor Woodberry's sonnet on *Our First Century*. But modern problems and modern conditions lend themselves diffidently to text-book uses. Yet it rests with the teacher to make discussion along these lines, even with young students, fruitful in awakening thought and rousing the patriotic conscience.

REVIEW QUESTIONS: Why did the aristocratic type of President go out of favor? How did the United States secure industrial independence of Great Britain? What was the effect of the new national consciousness on the joy and pride of life? Why had beauty been so little considered in

the earlier centuries? How did music come to New England? When did the love of romantic scenery appear in America? What two arts glorified the Catskills? Why did New York, rather than Boston or Williamsburg, take the lead in liberal culture? How do the old-fashioned annuals compare with the magazines of to-day? Who were the chief American writers of the first third of the century? How did the Knickerbocker literature embody the prevailing temper of the times?

What was the significance of Jackson's election? What impulses drove men West? How does the face of Lincoln, as contrasted with that of Irving, reveal a new fashion of American? How did the country catch its fever of business enterprise? What elements were added to the population? What principle regulated the admission of states? Why was the West silent in literature, before the War? Why were music and oratory the characteristic arts of the South? How, at this national crisis, was New England aroused to the richest literary utterance that America has yet known? What influences flowed into the national life from Germany, Italy, France? Who were the chief American writers of the second third of the century? How did the Transcendental literature embody the temper of the times?

What were the losses and gains of the Civil War? What section of the country leads to-day? What has been the rate of advance, during the century, in national area and population and in the number of states? What are now our gravest dangers and surest grounds of hope? What has come to pass in the way of educational development, and growth of the Press? How far do our present artistic conditions, in music, painting, sculpture, architecture, the stage and literature, correspond with one another?

## CHAPTER IV

EMINENT authorities here are Stedman's *Poets of America* (Boston, Houghton, 1885, $2.25) and Lowell's *Fable for Critics*. It is of interest to compare Hamlin Garland's *Crumbling Idols* (Chicago, Stone and Kimball, 1894, $1.25). Stoddard's *Poets' Homes* (Boston, Lothrop, 1877, $2) well represents books of that variety. Louise Manning Hodgkins's *Guide to the Study of Nineteenth Century Authors* (Boston, Heath, 1889, $1) gives analyses and references for Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, and Emerson. In cases where the school or the individual students cannot do what is most desirable and provide simple editions of the six chief New England poets, recourse may be had to Horace E. Scudder's *American Poems* (Boston, Houghton, 1895, $1). The complete poems of Bryant may be obtained in the Household Edition or Cabinet Edition (New York, Appleton, $1.50 and $1); of Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, and Whittier, each in the Cambridge Edition (Boston, Houghton, $2); of Emerson, in one volume of the Household Edition (Boston, Houghton, $1.50); of Poe, in one volume of the Stedman and Woodberry Edition (Chicago, Stone and Kimball, $1.50). For Whitman, there is an excellent volume of *Selected Poems* (New York, Webster, 1892, $.75). There are biographies of Bryant by Parke Godwin (New York, Appleton, 1883, $6, 2 vols.), by G. W. Curtis (New York, Scribner, 1879, $.75), and by John Bigelow (Boston, Houghton, 1890, $1.25); of Longfellow, by his brother Samuel Longfellow (Boston, Houghton, 1887, $6, 3 vols.) and by Eric S. Robertson (London, Scott, 1887, $.50); of Lowell, by F. H. Underwood (Boston, Lee and Shepard, 1893, $1.25) and by G. E. Woodberry (Boston, Houghton, *in prep.*, $1.25); of Holmes, only,

as yet, the sketch by Walt Jerrold (New York, Macmillan, 1893, $.90); of Whittier, by S. T. Pickard (Boston, Houghton, 1894, $3, 2 vols.) and W. J. Linton (London, Scott, 1893, $.50); of Emerson, by J. E. Cabot (Boston, Houghton, 1887, $3.50, 2 vols.) and by Dr. Holmes (Boston, Houghton, 1885, $1.25).

Alluding more briefly to other books of interest respecting our American poets, there are the reminiscences of Mrs. James T. Fields, herself a poet, in her *Authors and Friends*, G. W. Curtis's *Literary and Social Studies*, Whipple's *Essays and Reviews*, Horace E. Scudder's *Men and Letters*, Barrett Wendell's *Stelligeri*, Henry James's *Essays in London*, and Vedder's *American Writers of To-day*. Mrs. Fields's *Whittier* and Mrs. Mary B. Claflin's *Personal Recollections of John G. Whittier* give delightful memories. Charles Eliot Norton has edited Lowell's *Letters*, and, also, that invaluable *Correspondence between Carlyle and Emerson*. (For a picture of Emerson's home life, read his letter to Carlyle of May 10, 1838.) G. W. Cooke has written on Emerson's *Life, Writings and Philosophy*, and M. D. Conway on *Emerson at Home and Abroad*. His inspiring power with young men is shown in Charles J. Woodbury's *Talks with Ralph Waldo Emerson*. For English criticism on Emerson, see John Morley's *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Augustine Birrell's *Obiter Dicta*, second series, and Matthew Arnold's *Discourses in America*. For recent American criticism, see Henry James's *Partial Portraits* and John Jay Chapman's *Emerson, Sixty Years After* (*Atlantic Monthly*, January, February, 1897). It is probably better, however, to introduce Emerson to a class as man and poet before insisting on his Transcendentalism.

However rich the spoils that the teacher may bring back

from his conquest of such volumes, students are more profitably employed, as a rule, in reading the poems themselves. To use this text-book intelligently, they should look up the poems as mentioned. Constant memorizing is the best possible poetic training. There is truth in the phrase "learning by heart." It is pleasant to hear the poets bidding hail to one another, — to hear Holmes honoring Whittier's *Seventieth Birthday* and *Eightieth Birthday*, saluting Lowell and lamenting Longfellow, while Whittier, in turn, greets *Bryant on his Birthday*, joins in *A Welcome to Lowell*, tenderly praises Longfellow in *The Poet and the Children*, and responds to Holmes in *The Autocrat*. In the study of each poet, the poems addressed to him by his friends should not be forgotten.

The selection of minor poets may well be open to local variations. The fifteen mentioned for New England might more easily have been thirty. The poetry of the South is but rapidly considered. Many New York singers are passed in silence, from Charles De Kay, grandson of Joseph Rodman Drake, to the grave theologian, Professor Clement C. Moore, whose *Visit from St. Nicholas* has done more for his fame than his Hebrew lexicon. Western authors of repute are also crowded out; but the prophets of the neighborhood, each State having its own roll of honor, should not be neglected.

REVIEW QUESTIONS: What influences of Bryant's early life may be traced in his poetry? Illustrate from his poems, by your own selections, his intimate knowledge of nature, his profound feeling for nature, his loftiness of tone. Why is Longfellow the most popular of American poets? Which of his poems are your favorites, and why? How do Lowell's nature poems compare with Bryant's? How do his poems of

sentiment compare with Longfellow's? How does Holmes's wit compare with Lowell's? What common features appear in the careers of Longfellow, Lowell, and Holmes? Apart from his limited schooling, in what did Whittier's education consist? How does his heredity show in his poetry? Compare Whittier's feeling for nature and for humanity with Emerson's. Search through Emerson's poems for great watch-words of life. Select beautiful pictures from Aldrich. What was Poe's theory of poetry? Show by your own selections how fully he carried it out. What elements of moral beauty, missing in Poe's work, enrich Lanier's? What has friendship meant in the annals of New York poetry? What has the New York environment meant? In what respects does Whitman differ from Longfellow? Trace our western poetry from the Ohio valley to the Pacific slope.

## CHAPTER V

CERTAIN of the references given for the preceding chapter, especially those relating to Emerson, Lowell, and Holmes, apply equally to this. Scudder's *American Prose*, uniform with his *American Poetry*, contains representative selections. On the first section, light could be shed by O. B. Frothingham's *Boston Unitarianism* (New York, Putnam, 1890, $1.75), his *Transcendentalism in New England* (New York, Putnam, 1876, $2.50), and his *George Ripley* (Boston, Houghton, 1882, $1.25). G. T. Bradford's *Reminiscences of Brook Farm* (*Century Magazine*, November, 1892) is of interest. For the students, there are Emerson's essays on *The New England Reformers* and *The Transcendentalist*, and Louisa Alcott's *Transcendental Wild Oats*, in *Silver Pitchers*. Emerson's *Address on Theodore Parker* is not too

long for the classroom, and Whittier's poem on *Channing* would be nobly in place, as also Lowell's *Elegy on the Death of Dr. Channing*. Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance* will inevitably turn attention to Margaret Fuller, whose *Memoirs*, edited in 1852 by James Freeman Clarke, Emerson, and the younger Channing, were followed by biographies by Mrs. Julia Ward Howe in the *Eminent Women Series* and by Colonel Higginson in the *American Men of Letters*. A recent book by Caroline W. Healey, *Margaret and her Friends*, restores the atmosphere of those Boston *Conversations*. A child's happy impression of Alcott is given in Mrs. Lathrop's *Memories of Hawthorne*. See also *Louisa M. Alcott: Her Life, Letters, and Journals*, edited by E. D. Cheney (Boston, Roberts Bros., 1889, $1.50).

References for the second and third sections have been anticipated. The table-talk of Dr. Holmes can at least be sampled by young students, but what they can read of Lowell must depend in large measure upon what they already know. The Shakespeare essay, for instance, presumably covers ground less strange to them than that invaded by the Dante essay. See William Watson's *Excursions in Criticism* for a brief study of *Lowell as a Critic*.

For the fourth section, the authoritative biographies are Ticknor's *Prescott* (Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1875, $2.50), Holmes's *Motley* (Boston, Houghton, 1879, $1.50), and Farnham's *Parkman* (Boston, Little, Brown & Co., $2.50). Professor Fiske has a life of Parkman under way for the *American Men of Letters* series, and a brief *Autobiography* was published in the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine* for June, 1895. All these are considered in Professor J. F. Jameson's *History of Historical Writing in America* (Boston, Houghton, 1891, $1.25). Whipple's *Recollections*

*of Eminent Men* pays tribute to Motley, while Prescott finds a place in his *Essays and Reviews*. Vedder's *American Writers of To-day* includes Parkman. Even if these authors can be approached at present only through extracts read by the teacher in the classroom, they may find such lodgment in young minds as to insure them a full reading by and by.

For the orators, there is an abundance of semi-political material. The Abolitionists figure largely in Colonel Higginson's *Cheerful Yesterdays* (Boston, Houghton, 1897, $1.50). In the *American Reformers Series*, together with lives of Frederick Douglas, John B. Gough, Whittier and his "Cadmus of the blind," Dr. S. G. Howe, are biographies of William Lloyd Garrison and Charles Sumner, by A. H. Grimke; of Abraham Lincoln, by C. Wallace French; and of Wendell Phillips, by C. Martyn (New York, Funk, each $1.50). G. L. Austin's *Life and Times of Wendell Phillips* (Boston, Lee and Shepard, 1884, $1.50) is valuable, and G. W. Curtis's *Memorial Address on Wendell Phillips* (New York, Alden, 1885, $.25) should not be beyond the reach of students, while Aldrich's *Monody* might be rendered in the classroom. Edward L Pierce's *Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner* (Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1893, $20, 4 vols.) is an elaborate work, but Whittier's poems of 1854 and 1874 to Charles Sumner are not far to seek. There is an address by the younger R. H. Dana on the *Life and Public Services of Edward Everett*, who is considered, too, in Whipple's *Character and Characteristic Men* and Emerson's *Life and Letters in New England*. Nor should Holmes's poem be forgotten. In the *American Statesmen Series* are lives of Sumner, Clay, Calhoun, Lincoln, and Webster. Trent's *Southern Statesmen of the Old Régime* (noted

above) includes Calhoun, Stephens, and Jefferson Davis. The standard biography of Webster is by G. T. Curtis (New York, Appleton, 1870, $12, 2 vols.), and there are valuable studies of his oratory by Judge Chamberlain, Whipple, and Rufus Choate. Whittier's two poems on Webster should be compared. A life of Henry Ward Beecher has been written by his son and son-in-law (New York, Bromfield, 1888, $12), and the biography of Phillips Brooks, by Professor A. V. G. Allen, is about to appear.

For the final section, see William Jay Youman's *Pioneers of Science in America* (New York, Appleton, 1897, $4), and refer the class to Whipple's lecture on Agassiz. Holmes's *Farewell to Agassiz*, selections from Lowell's elegy on Agassiz (in *Heartsease and Rue*), and Whittier's *Prayer of Agassiz* might be recited in the classroom. Salt's *Life of Thoreau*, in the *Great Writers* series, is accompanied by one of the invaluable Anderson bibliographies, so it may suffice here to mention the study by Dr. A. H. Japp, who writes over the pen-name of Henry A. Page, trying to show Thoreau as a modern Francis of Assisi, Lowell's over-sharp essay in *My Study Windows*, and Stevenson's essay in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. Burrough's essay on Thoreau in *Indoor Studies* casts light upon them both. Emerson's description of Thoreau in *Woodnotes* should be brought into the classroom.

REVIEW QUESTIONS: What is Transcendentalism? What ideal was Emerson's "angel from childhood"? What are, in his view, the best uses of nature, the noblest qualities of character, the purest thought of God? What had Emerson in common with Channing, with Margaret Fuller, with Alcott? How does the influence of scientific study show in the writings of Holmes? How far do his table-talk books make a con-

nected series? What are Lowell's excellences as a critic? How do the several themes of our four chief historians bear on America? Compare Webster's eloquence with Patrick Henry's, Clay's, Calhoun's, Choate's, Wendell Phillips's, Everett's, Lincoln's. Wherein is Thoreau unlike Emerson, unlike Agassiz, unlike Burroughs?

## CHAPTER VI

A UNIQUE biography of Cooper has been contributed by Professor T. H. Lounsbury to the *American Men of Letters*. *A Glance Backward*, by Cooper's daughter, may be found in the *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1887. William Winter has an appreciation in *Old Shrines and Ivy*. The audacious attack upon Cooper by "Mark Twain" in the *North American Review*, July, 1895 (answered in the *Dial*, Feb. 16, 1897) has been gathered into his book, *How to Tell a Story, and Other Essays*. See also Poe's *Literati*. Professor William P. Trent's life of Simms, in the *American Men of Letters Series*, helps much toward the apprehension of southern literary conditions.

In this same series, Irving has found a sympathetic biographer in Charles Dudley Warner. There is a fuller biography by his nephew, Pierre M. Irving (New York, Putnam, 1862, $4.50, 3 vols.). For criticism, see Howells's *My Literary Passions* and Curtis's *Literary and Social Addresses*. Lowell greets Irving cordially in the *Fable for Critics*, and there is an article upon him by Donald G. Mitchell in the *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1864.

Professor Woodberry's Life of Poe, in the *American Men of Letters*, is condensed into the memoir which opens the first volume of the admirable Stedman and Woodberry edi-

tion (Chicago, Stone and Kimball, 1895, each vol. $1.50, 10 vols.). See Higginson's *Short Studies of American Authors* for a personal impression. There has been in America thus far more controversy about Poe's conduct than study of his genius, but the student of French literature will easily find his way to much enthusiastic discussion of Baudelaire's acknowledged master.

Henry James has an acute study of Hawthorne in the *English Men of Letters*, and M. D. Conway a clear-cut narrative in the *Great Writers*, but the biographers of Hawthorne are mainly of his own household. His son, Julian Hawthorne, has written *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife* (Boston, Osgood, 1884, $12, 2 vols.); his son-in-law, George Parsons Lathrop, contributed a *Study of Hawthorne* (Boston, Houghton, 1886, $.50); and now his daughter, Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, follows with *Memories of Hawthorne* (Boston, Houghton, 1897, $1.50). Nearly allied to these in warmth of personal feeling are the tributes by his college friend, Horatio Bridge (*Personal Recollections of Hawthorne*), and his publisher, James T. Fields (in *Yesterdays with Authors*). See also Poe's *Literati*, Lowell's *Fable for Critics*, Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library*, Alexander Smith's *Dreamthorp* ("*A Shelf in My Bookcase*"), and R. H. Hutton's *Essays in Literary Criticism*.

Our present-day fiction, by its abundance, variety, and uniform excellence of workmanship, makes discrimination extremely difficult. Here, as in the poetry of the hour, locality may well have weight in determining the classroom emphasis. The leading article in the fortieth anniversary number of the *Atlantic Monthly* (October, 1897), *Two Principles in Recent American Fiction*, by James Lane Allen, is suggestive.

It may be considered unwise to attempt criticism of fiction-forms with young students, but the main distinctions, especially that wavering line between realism and idealism, are such current coin of conversation that even boys and girls can hardly go scot-free. All this, however, rests safely with the judicious teacher, to whom the present writer apologizes for the effrontery of any suggestions at all.

REVIEW QUESTIONS: What are the romantic elements in Cooper's novels? Examine the plot and style of the one best known to you. How far did his life fit him for his work? How far did his infirmities of temper mar his literary achievement? What in life impressed Irving as comic, what as pathetic? What are the romantic elements in his tales? In what sense did he discover England and Spain? In what sense did he create the Knickerbocker legend? What are his beauties of style? What are Poe's themes? What is the secret of his power in detective stories and tales of pseudo-science? What is repulsive, and what attractive, in his tales of the supernatural? How does his style compare with Cooper's, with Irving's? What are the resemblances in the careers of these three authors? What differences in career and in temperament? How is Hawthorne like, how unlike, Poe? How does Hawthorne's heredity show in his writings? What was his self-imposed training as a literary artist? How far was he a Transcendentalist? What are the ideal elements in his romances? What is modern realism? How is it illustrated by Howells, by James? What is Crawford's theory of the function of the novel? What is the tendency of the new southern fiction? Who are your favorite American story-tellers, and why?

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